Commentary

Volume Forty-Nine, Number Six, June 1970

The Palestinians and Israel

by Shlomo Avineri

Quackery in the Classroom

Samuel McCracken

Literary Revolutionism

Renee Winegarten

In Sickness and in Health

Eric J. Cassell

Joyce Carol Oates: Violence in the Head

Elizabeth Dalton

Jesus and the Jews

Chaim Raphael

Books in Review

Edward Grossman on Mary McCarthy
Edward J. Epstein on Nicholas Johnson

also Arthur A. Cohen, Barry Gewen, Allen Weinstein

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a monthly column by
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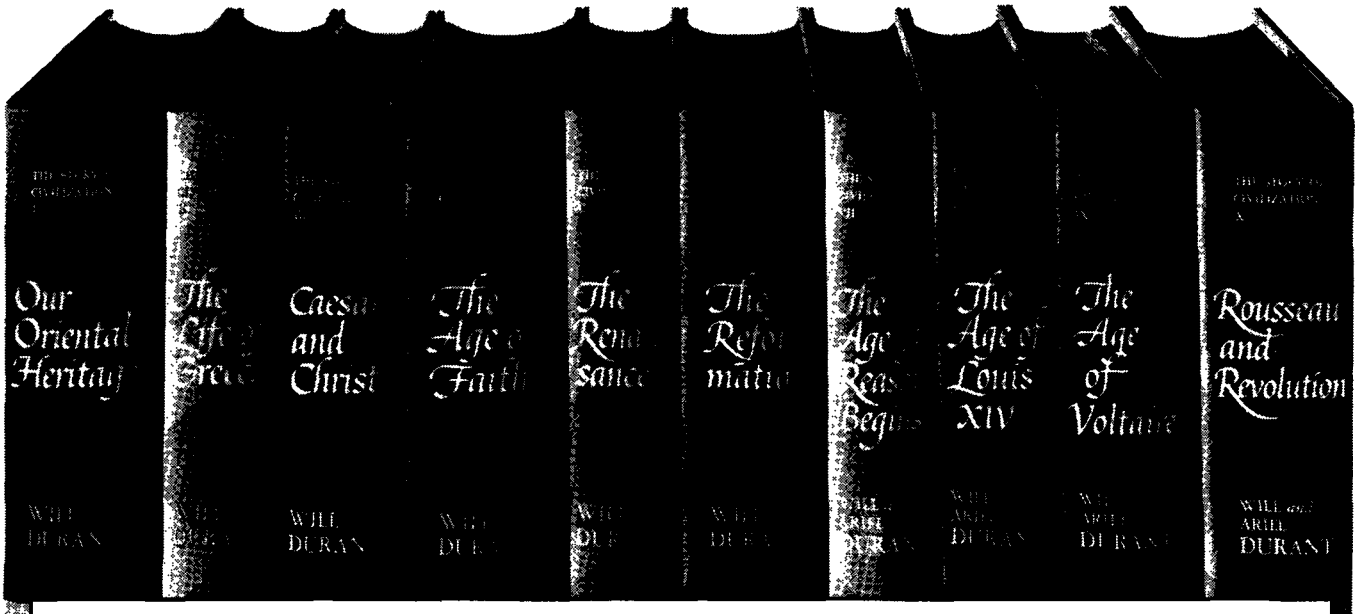

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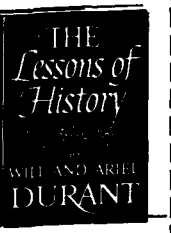

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

Lindsay

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

People really are more fun than anybody and Roger Starr's article on John Lindsay ["John V. Lindsay: A Political Portrait," February] is extraordinarily interesting. There must be a balance in reading conclusionary observations, and Mr. Starr does not stray too wide of the mark in this case.

One egregious misconception should be corrected, however. Taking Mr. Lindsay on was never even covertly encouraged by Nelson Rockefeller. It was quite the contrary. The truth of the matter is that I did it all with my own little primary. I felt that the integrity of the Republican party could not be sustained, even for pragmatic reasons, if someone failed to join the issue.

JOHN J. MARCHI
The Senate
Albany, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Roger Starr's article is one of the most incisive accounts of the first Lindsay administration I have seen. It offers a rare insight into the Mayor's personality. Mr. Starr is quite right when he states that almost all of the men who came to power with Mayor Lindsay in 1966 believed at the time "that everything that had happened in City Hall before their arrival had been venal and corrupt."

However, when he attributes to me the announcement that "power brokers will no longer be welcome at City Hall" and writes that this statement was a "policy decision" by Deputy Mayor Robert Price, he has not given the reader the full story as it occurred. I did make the statement, but only after Mayor Lindsay himself—in a speech during the transit strike on January 10—warned that the city "will not capitulate before the lawless demands of a single group . . . it will not allow the power brokers in our city, or any special interest, to dictate to this city the terms under which it will exist in New York."

Following this speech, the Mayor and I were frequently asked to identify the power brokers. When I was first asked by the press, the Mayor instructed me to issue this comment: "They know who they are." It is possible that Lindsay conferred with Price about this, but to the best of my knowledge, this was a decision the Mayor made on his own.

In general, I must congratulate Mr. Starr for his excellent reporting and writing. His piece is a real contribution to Lindsay-watchers all over the nation.

WOODY KLEIN
Westport, Connecticut

Intermarriage

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was a fascinating experience reading Marshall Sklare's "Intermarriage & Jewish Survival" [March]. Mr. Sklare . . . shaped the materials of my presentation before the 1969 biennial meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to serve his prejudice. . . . An interesting example of Mr. Sklare's handling of the material to suit his purposes appears in a parenthesis which reads: "(As Rabbi Klausner put it: 'Reform believes that from every tree you may eat')." The obvious implication of this phrase is that, for me, Reform Judaism allows for anything and everything. The quotation should have read: "From all the trees *in the garden* [Eden] you may eat." The addition of the words, "in the garden," changes the image. It casts us into the dialogue between man (Adam and Eve) and God, an experience we cherish.

This biblical reference was intended for a purpose other than that implied by Mr. Sklare. It was offered as a criticism of those rabbis who had voted for the resolution on intermarriage, indicating to them that though the conference had not taken a position on any ritual or religious practice, thus allowing for an interpretation on the part of the rabbi, in the case of intermarriage, it did, by a majority vote, resolve to discourage rabbinical sanction of such marriages. Therefore, "Of all the trees you may eat except this one."

Another interesting sequence in Mr. Sklare's article occurs in his analysis of my attitude toward conversion. In a series of intriguing steps, he brings me into comradeship with the right-wing Orthodox rabbinical judges of the religious court of London. Let us see how he accomplishes this. First, he

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has me declare that "apparently" I regard "conversion as passé." However, he credits me with making a distinction between "true" conversion and "conversion-for-marriage." This, it turns out, is a sinister move on my part. True conversion, he has me argue, calls for such high standards as to make the conversion process difficult and discouraging. By making conversion a valid experience, Mr. Sklare contends, I would in effect destroy it, and thus allow intermarriage to take place without conversion. I wonder whether this sinister approach to the question of conversion can be extracted from the following:

To further elaborate on the ambivalence with which we approach the mixed marriage, I note that if a conversion takes place, rabbis will officiate at the marriage, saying it is no longer a mixed marriage. Would I be harsh if I suggested that this is an act of self-deception? Our rabbis know well that conversion is a deeply personal, evolving experience, embracing the totality of the human being. In the New York area, under the aegis of the New York Federation of Reform Temples, a program is in effect which offers a quickie conversion certificate at the conclusion of nine study sessions. Obviously, these few sessions of instruction will not suffice to redirect and refine the religious sensitivities of an individual. This program is, at best, symbolic. It does have worth. We are convinced that individuals should be prepared for marriage. To this end, programs have been established by mental health organizations and also our own counseling service. Certainly the difference of faiths in a marriage should be discussed and decisions made for a unity of spirit within the home. The New York program serves this purpose. It does not change one in a manner which would justify our reclassification of the marriage from that of a mixed to an in-marriage.

In all his writings on the subject of intermarriage and Jewish survival, Mr. Sklare does not define the purpose of survival. He deals primarily with statistics and allows for no analysis of the objective of the religious experience.

I am not "for" or "against" intermarriage. I do not see myself as God's policeman. In terms of my loyalties and commitments, urged by the tradition as I see and understand it, I deal with human situations as they grow out of cultural imperatives. Intermarriage was, is, and will be part of our social heritage. I choose to embrace rather than to reject the experience.

I would also like to note that I did not call upon the Central Conference of American Rabbis to join me in my approach nor do I ask the Beth Din of London to negate its Halacha. I offered that within the Reform tradition the dynamic of religious response to natural situations should be preserved.

RABBI ABRAHAM J. KLAUSNER
Congregation Emanu-El
Yonkers, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Marshall Sklare's discussion of community attitudes toward intermarriage is cogent, and I have no quarrel with it. It does, however, give rise to the unwarranted inference that American Jewry is imminently and massively threatened by intermarriage, and it may, therefore, lead to the same sort of panic which gripped much of the Jewish community back in 1963 and 1964 when new data concerning intermarriage were first reported. Readers unfamiliar with the methodological morass which students of intermarriage encounter are prone to conclude that if, as Sklare suggests, about one in four of all marriages involving at least one Jew involves only one Jew, some 25 per cent of all Jews will be "lost." Such a statistic is quite disturbing to those committed to Jewish survival, and, therefore, it is important to note that even if the one-in-four figure for intermarriage is correct, we are still a long way from knowing what the actual loss to Jewry is. The incidence of intermarriage is only one of the components in determining actual loss.

Thus, for example, it is important to know a) the sex distribution of the intermarried, b) their conversion rate, and c) the degree to which even non-converts are likely to raise their children as Jews. We have scanty data on the last two of these, but it has long been established that roughly two-

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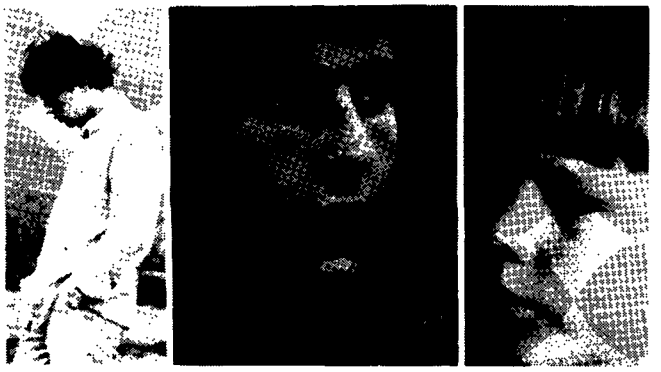

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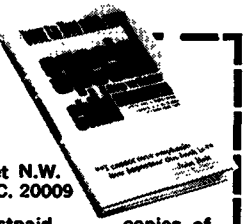

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THE REV. GEORGE VON HILSHEIMER is a Bretheren Minister who is General Superintendent of Humanitas, President of the Fund for Migrant Children, former Chairman for Regional, State and Local Programs of the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders. He was a consultant to President Kennedy's Committee for National Voluntary Services (VISTA), a former Director of Mobilization for Youth, a former consultant to President Kennedy's Committee on Migratory Labor, and the founder of SUMMERLANE, America's first Summerhillian school.

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thirds of all Jews who intermarry are male. This continuing circumstance radically affects the consequences of Jewish intermarriage, since, as Mr. Sklare points out, the issue is not really how many Jews intermarry, but how many potential Jewish families fail to come into being as a result of intermarriage. Thus, if we have five hundred Jewish males and five hundred Jewish females, a 25 per cent intermarriage rate could involve anything from a 4 per cent loss to a 25 per cent loss, depending entirely on the sex distribution of Jews who intermarry.

Where that distribution is about two-thirds male and one-third female, the maximum potential loss, even if none of the intermarried raises his children as Jews, is 18 per cent. Since large numbers do raise their children as Jews, the actual loss is still lower. In fact, on the basis of some data which recently became available, we may estimate that the actual loss to the Jewish community through intermarriage, taking into account conversion, the sex ratio, and efforts to rear children as Jews in intermarried families, is approximately 27 per cent of the rate of intermarriage. Accordingly, a 25 per cent rate results in less than a 7 per cent loss, which may be a cause for concern, but hardly for panic.

In brief, the rate of intermarriage describes the loss to Jewry only when all the intermarried Jews are of the same sex and none raises his children as Jews, conditions that are never encountered in the real world. Those interested in pursuing the matter may find a complete description of both the methodology and the new data in my article in a forthcoming issue of *Jewish Social Studies*.

LEONARD J. FEIN
Department of Political Science
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Marshall Sklare . . . exaggerates the issue of survival. First of all, we lack information on the gains to Judaism as a result of conversions that stem from intermarriage. To talk of intermarriage only in terms of losss is therefore a one-sided view of the issue.

Mr. Sklare refers to a 1965 survey of Boston that shows an overall intermarriage rate for Jews of 7 per cent. For younger couples, however, the rate is 20 per cent, and Mr. Sklare sees this as a reflection of a sharp trend toward increased intermarriage. He tells us "we can safely assume that the figure is now approaching one in four." Perhaps, and perhaps not. The difference in the rates may be due in (small or large) part to the higher number of post-marriage and pre-survey conversions for the older couples, who have had more time to decide upon conversion.

When Mr. Sklare refers to a 20-per-cent rate, most readers will take it to mean that *one Jew out of five* is intermarrying. However, Mr. Sklare apparently means that one "Jewish" marriage out of five is a mixed marriage—in other words, out of ten individuals (five marriages) nine are Jewish, and only one of these nine is in a mixed marriage. This gives us a mixed marriage rate of *one Jew out of nine*, or about 11 per cent. The confusion between the two rates is common in much of the writing about mixed marriages, as I have pointed out several times (for example, see *Marriage, Family, and Society*, 1965).

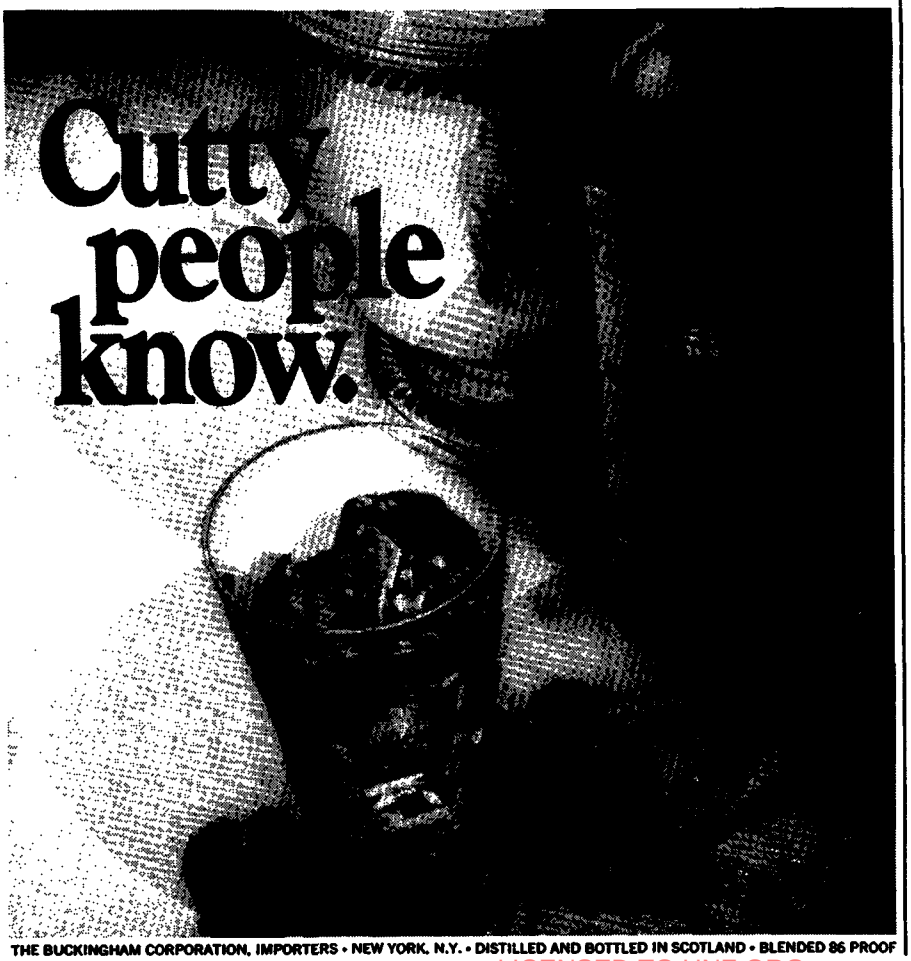
In short, by omitting information about conversions and by confusing the different mixed-marriage rates, Mr. Sklare exaggerates the problem. Ignoring conversions, and using Mr. Sklare's most extreme figure of "one in four" (which is one of seven individuals), we still find that 86 per cent of all Jews are marrying other Jews. Hardly an ominous figure, and hardly a question of Jewish survival.

HYMAN RODMAN
The Merrill-Palmer Institute
Detroit, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Sklare may be putting the cart before the horse. In my neighborhood in Westchester, intermarriage is a symptom of the desire to assimilate rather than the cause of assimilation. There are half a dozen mixed marriages with grown children in my neighborhood. All of them could have brought up their children as Jews. Only one chose to do so.

The world looked upon the others as Jewish families, since in every case the husband had a Jewish-sounding name. But he wanted to assimilate. In one family, the Christian mother suggested that



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their son go to Hebrew school and have a Bar-Mitzvah ceremony. The father forbade it. Obviously in need of religion, this boy has become a Hindu and has married in that faith. All of the other "mixed" children have married non-Jews except the girl who was brought up as a Jew. She married the son of an Orthodox rabbi.

But it is not only the partners in mixed marriages who want to assimilate. Not in my neighborhood. About half of the families in which both partners were born Jewish have not given their children a Jewish education. Some sent their children to the Ethical Culture school. The desire to assimilate was absorbed by these children from their parents. (Not every middle-class child is in rebellion against the values of his parents.) There has been at least one marriage in each of these families and all have been intermarriages. So far, there have been no intermarriages among those of my neighbors who gave their children a Jewish education, however minimal. It may not be limited Jewish education which inhibits intermarriage, but the knowledge that the family is Jewish and wishes to remain within the fold.

JESSE ZEL LURIE
Hadassah Magazine
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The question of what is meant by "group survival" is a difficult one to answer, but clearly critical in terms of the implications it holds for the "intermarriage issue." It seems to me that one can approach an answer to this question by distinguishing among at least three analytically independent dimensions of group survival: 1) physical survival; 2) social survival; and 3) cultural survival.

The majority of Mr. Sklare's comments define survival from a physical standpoint: "On the group level, it [intermarriage] poses the obvious dangers of physical attrition." Here there is no argument. If our concern is one of sheer numbers, then it follows by definition that an increasing rate of intermarriage (other things being equal) will endanger the survival of the group. . . .

By "social survival" I mean the day-to-day carrying out of practices and customs distinctive to a given group. The ritualistic observance of various holidays, *rites de passage*, language patterns, and the like would be characteristic of social survival. Though obviously tied to the question of "physical survival," there is no necessary relationship between the two. Indeed, one of the ironies in the history of the Jewish people has been their tenacious ability to continue to practice "social survival" even in the face of physical extinction, and dispersal. It would be interesting to examine the degree of "social survival" of Judaism among mixed marriages. My suspicions are that it is higher than Mr. Sklare or others generally assume to be the case.

Finally we come to cultural survival. Here the concern is with the most general set of values and beliefs characteristic of a group. Though perhaps dependent on physical and social survival, these factors transcend group boundaries; nor is it wholly necessary for one to be a practitioner of the faith in order to incorporate the cultural values of the group. Quite the contrary, one could argue quite persuasively that the ritualistic performance of group "duties" often deters the inculcation of group values and beliefs.

The analysis of the impact of intermarriage on group survival, therefore, depends on one's definition of survival or what aspects of it you are looking at. From the evidence which Mr. Sklare cites on the growing number of Jewish synagogues and community centers, and the renewed interest in Jewish studies on college campuses, it is reasonable to hypothesize that survival, and in all likelihood *cultural survival*, has increased, not decreased, in recent years. More importantly, this type of survival may be "because of," not "in spite of," the increasing rate of intermarriage. . . .

ALVIN L. JACOBSON
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There is an insistent and illogical pessimism in Mr. Sklare's writing on intermarriage which is difficult to understand, unless it is based on some undisclosed premise. It seems likely that his view of Judaism centers upon the maintenance of traditional taboos which are neither widely understood nor respected in modern America, or perhaps he views the Jewish people as an ethnic entity which necessarily suffers undesirable change

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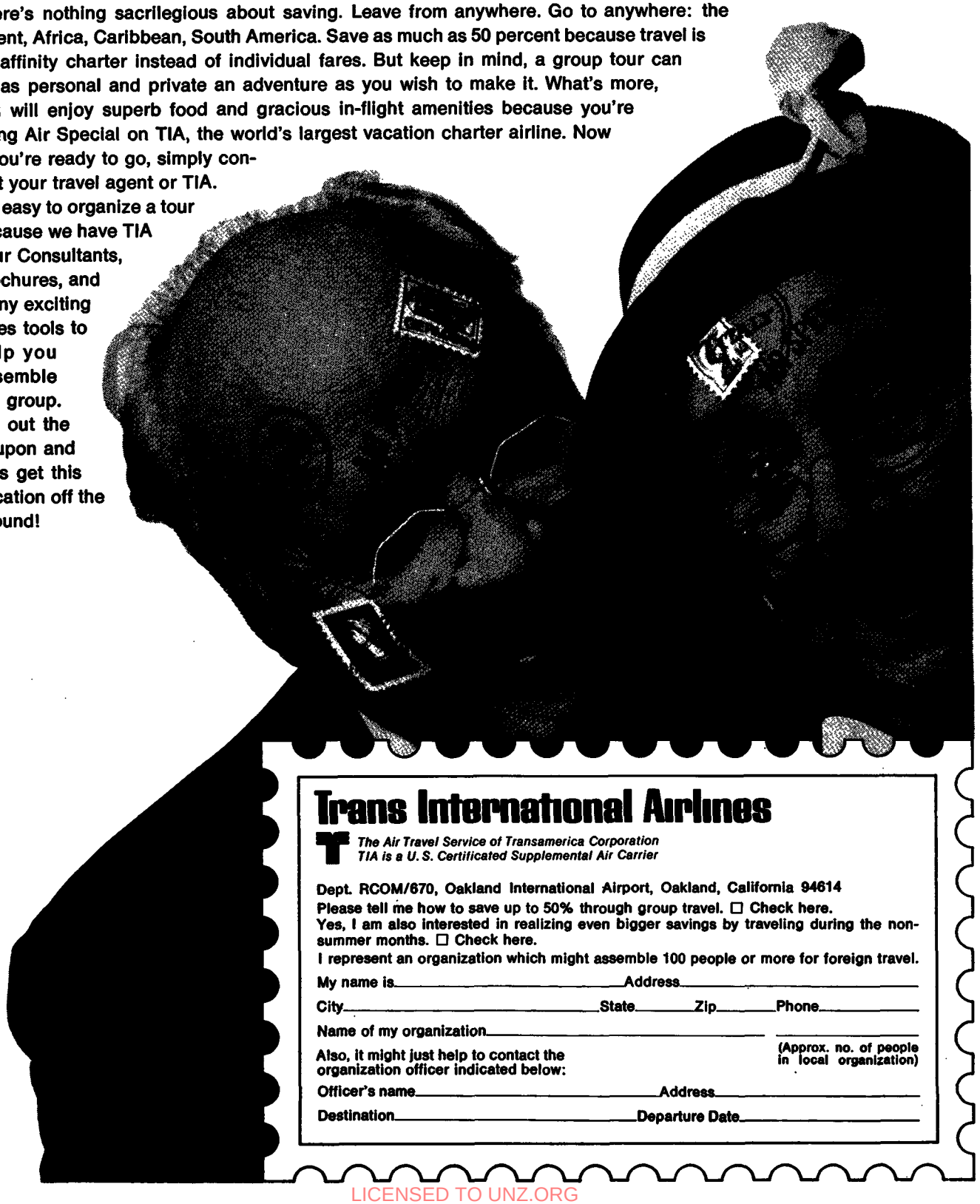

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through intermingling with other Americans.

The weakness of Mr. Sklare's analysis is most striking when he writes that "all minorities in the United States . . . who care about group survival must conclude that intermarriage is a palpable threat." He disregards a sound qualification by Werner J. Cahnman in the book to which he refers (*Intermarriage and Jewish Life*), where it is stated that the children of intermarriages "predominantly go to the higher status group." Thus, a high-status minority *gains* through intermarriage. If Jewish status is rising, as both of Sklare's articles indicate, how does he know we are not approaching the break-even point, after which intermarriage poses no demographic threat?

HOWARD F. SACHS
Kansas City, Missouri

MR. SKLARE writes:

Abraham J. Klausner takes me to task for quoting him to the effect that ". . . from every tree you may eat," whereas his text reads: "From all the trees in the garden you may eat." If this is the extent of my defective memory of his presentation before the 1969 biennial meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, I plead guilty. Of course I understood his image—hence the shorthand. And I assumed that readers of COMMENTARY would also know that when a rabbi juxtaposes the words "eat" and "tree" the reference is to Genesis 2:16.

I realize that it is painful for a man of the ultra-Left to have his psychological and ideological similarities with the ultra-Right highlighted. But that such parallelisms exist should come as no shock to Rabbi Klausner, since I am sure that he is acquainted with the findings of social psychologists on this matter. Let him take comfort in the fact that the *dayanim* of London are surely as unhappy with their resemblance to him as he is with his resemblance to them.

Rabbi Klausner's letter is an important document, for in its concluding paragraphs it presents a more succinct statement on the emerging ultra-Left position in Reform Judaism than he developed in Miami Beach. The crux of the Old Left position in Reform was its negative attitude toward Zionism. Judging from Rabbi Klausner's letter, the crux of the new ultra-Left position is its negative attitude toward those who oppose intermarriage. Thus, according to him, intermarriage "was, is, and will be part of our social heritage." Intermarriage, Rabbi Klausner seems to be saying, is an experience, a natural situation, which should be embraced lest one place himself outside of the cultural developments of our day. In sum, the Zionists have been replaced in New Left Reform thinking by those who oppose intermarriage.

Leonard J. Fein has not read my article with care. My objective was not to examine the "actual loss" from intermarriage, and thus I studiously avoided stating anything explicit on this matter. The subject, incidentally, is of greater complexity than he suggests, as has been discovered by those sociologists who have been devoting themselves assiduously over many years to investigating the less complicated subject of the "actual loss" from the intermarriage of American Catholics. Not only is our data about the "actual loss" from Jewish-Gentile intermarriage very meager, but it cannot as yet be properly evaluated. Thus, a definitive statement would involve comparing the loss from inmarriage—after all, there are endogamous couples who assimilate, or fail to transmit Jewish identity to their children.

As should have been evident to Mr. Fein, my brief statistical comments at the beginning of the article were only for the purpose of establishing the fact that the intermarriage rate is increasing rapidly. That accomplished, I proceeded to the objective of my inquiry: to analyze the Jewish response to this increase. In so doing, I focused upon the most acculturated elements in the Jewish community—those who experience the increase more sharply than other Jews. I attempted to show how they, as well as the rabbis who minister to them, are responding to this situation. And I indicated that, in my view, the pattern of accommodation which is emerging "has implications which strike at the very nature of Jewish identity in the modern world."

Hyman Rodman is also more interested in the statistical situation than in the content of my article. But his letter is an interesting document nevertheless, for in its complacency it shows how a sophisticated mind seeks to deny the obvious fact that intermarriage is on the increase and that this trend

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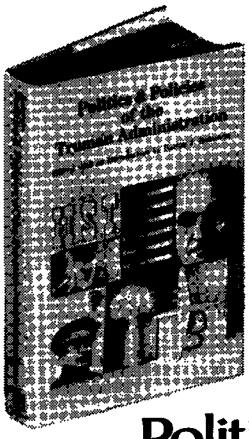

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has ominous implications for Jewish survival.

Mr. Rodman thus finds it difficult to accept the import of the findings of the Boston study, where it was shown that when the husband is fifty-one or over the incidence of intermarriage is only 3 per cent, but when the husband is thirty or younger the rate reaches 20 per cent. He suggests that this may not necessarily mean a rising intermarriage rate, it may only indicate that older couples have had "more time to decide upon conversion." All that Rodman had to do to test his hypothesis was to pick up the telephone and check with a few rabbis in Detroit. They would have told him that the Gentile women they convert who are engaged or married to Jews are predominantly, if not overwhelmingly, engaged or married to men in the younger age brackets.

Howard F. Sachs correctly suggests that the higher the status of a minority group the greater the likelihood that the group will be able to retain those who intermarry. But like so many other statements in social science this one has a caveat attached—"all other things being equal." They seldom are. Furthermore, how high is Jewish status, and how much higher can it rise? My answer is that it is not as high as Mr. Sachs seems to infer. And there is a ceiling above which it cannot rise, given America's continuity with its Christian past.

It might be well for Mr. Sachs, and other respondents who are critical of what he terms my "insistent and illogical pessimism," to study the ratio of the Jewish to the total American population. This ratio is now at its lowest point since the days of Jewish mass immigration. According to the *American Jewish Year Book*, in 1917 the Jews were 3.28 per cent of the population and by 1937 they had reached 3.70 per cent. But by 1967 they constituted only 2.92 per cent of America's population.

Whatever the analytic validity of Alvin F. Jacobson's distinctions among the "physical," "social," and "cultural," in actuality these dimensions are strongly interrelated. But it is clear that in developing these distinctions, Jacobson's purpose was not to advance sociological understanding but to make a case for intermarriage: "one could argue quite persuasively that . . . ritualistic performance [i.e. 'social survival'] . . . often deters the inculcation of group values [i.e. 'cultural survival']." Surely he is aware that James Yaffe devoted himself barely three years ago to making the very same case in *The American Jews*. Yaffe's language is less elegant than Jacobson's, but it has the advantage of directness:

> But what are these children [the offspring of intermarried couples] being lost to, really? The forms and institutions of Judaism certainly; they don't learn the blessings, go to Sunday School, accompany their parents to a synagogue. But they definitely aren't being lost to those universal ethical values which the forms and institutions are supposed to preserve. The children of mixed marriages . . . receive from their parents all those attitudes which we think of as belonging to the Judaic tradition. These parents have the same devotion to education, the same close family ties, the same standards of morality, the same belief in charity, the same liberal views in politics, that the Jewish community has. In every respect—except the formal and religious one—they are bringing up their children as Jews.

It is a hallmark of the contemporary American Jewish community that assimilationists insist upon designating themselves as survivalists.

Schlesinger vs. Chomsky

To the Editor of Commentary:

Noam Chomsky is getting to be incredible in all senses of the word: it has long been impossible to believe anything he says, and now it becomes increasingly difficult to believe that he exists.

His most recent communiqué [Letters from Readers, May] obligingly offers us a fresh example of his incorrigible intellectual crookedness. In his earlier letter [Letters from Readers, February], commenting on the book review wherein I exposed his fake Truman quotations, he spoke of Schlesinger's "elaborate pretense that he couldn't find the quotes." In my reply, I pointed out that I had found the source of two of the quotations with no trouble at all and had reported this with sufficient explicitness in the review to get through, one would have thought, even to Dr. Chomsky:

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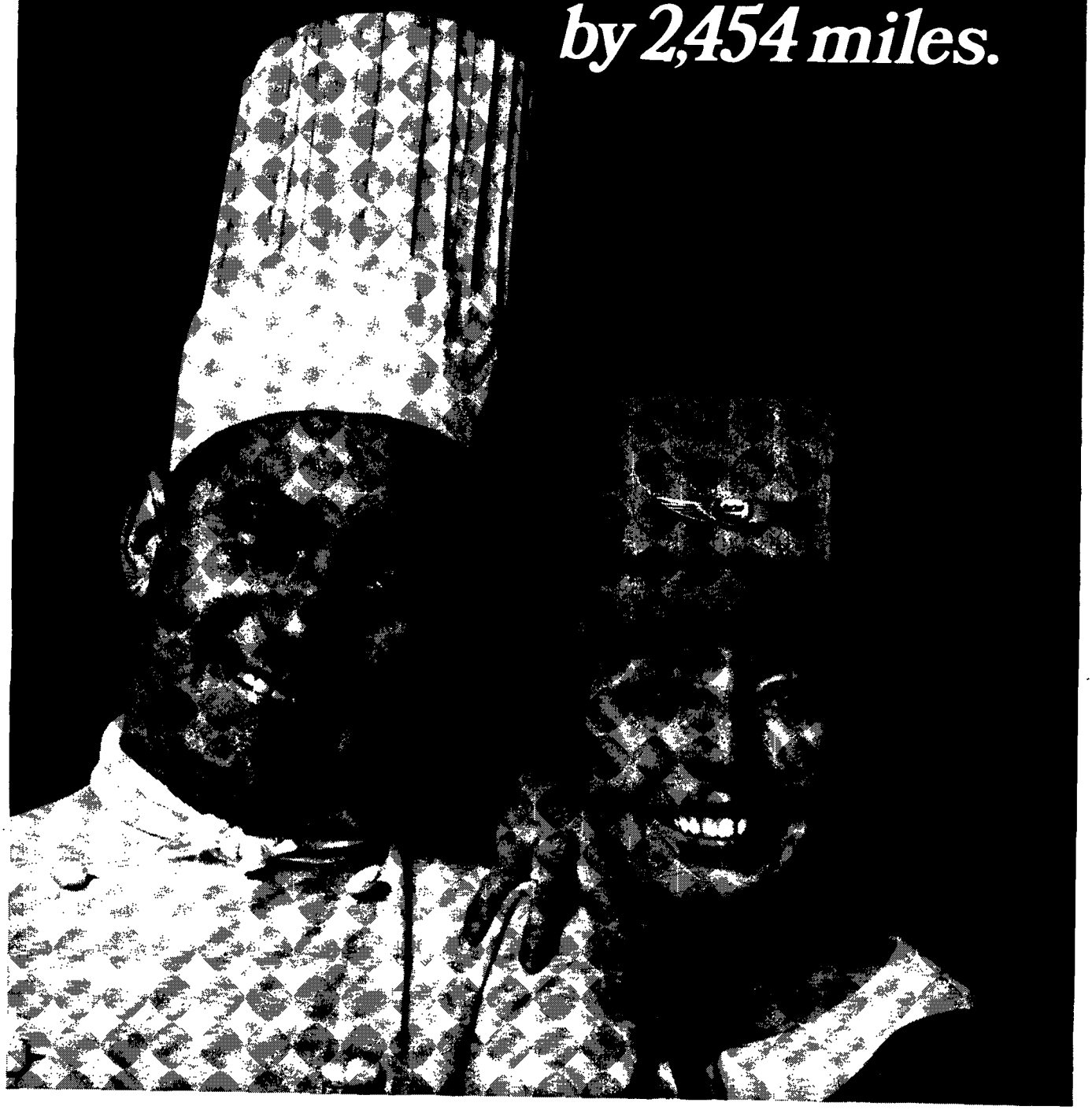

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While D. F. Fleming [whom Chomsky had cited as the source for the "quotations"] is hardly celebrated for the rigor of his scholarship, even he does not claim that Truman said them. The last two quotations, as the Fleming text makes clear, were not from Truman at all but from a book by J. P. Warburg in which Warburg was giving his own theory as to what was in Truman's mind.

Having been exposed in this lie, Dr. Chomsky writes in his new letter, "Schlesinger objects to my comment on his elaborate pretense that he was unable to find certain quotes." Let us watch this con man carefully as he begins his intellectual shell game. In February Dr. Chomsky spoke of my elaborate pretense that I couldn't find "*the* quotes"; in May he changes this to "*certain* quotes"; and he has the effrontery to suppose that the readers of COMMENTARY will not notice his sleight-of-hand. I have no doubt that he underestimates his audience. I am glad to note, though, that Dr. Chomsky has decided to abandon a number of his other trickeries, such as his fatuous charge that my position on the war in Vietnam is "a shade to the hawkish side of the Pentagon."

As for the main point, let me try once more in the faint hope that factual restatement may penetrate Dr. Chomsky's intricate defenses of deceit and mendacity. He wrote on pages 318-9 of his book:

> Suppose, however, that contrary to all present indications the United States will stop short of using its awesome resources of violence and devastation to impose *its passionately held ideology* and its approved form of social organization on large areas of the world. Suppose, that is, that American policy ceases to be dominated by the principles that were crudely outlined by President Truman almost twenty years ago . . . in a famous and important speech.

I defy anyone to find in the Truman speech anything suggesting that he was threatening violence and devastation against countries which declined to adopt the free-enterprise system; nor by continuing blandly to insist that this is what Truman said can Dr. Chomsky hope through wearisome reiteration to escape the penalty for deception. Let any reader of COMMENTARY look at the speech (Truman's *Public Papers* for 1947, pages 167-172) and decide for himself what Truman said. And, since Dr. Chomsky continues to regard Truman's 1947 plea for the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act and American membership in the International Trade Organization as one of the sinister events of our age, I still wish he would answer the questions he continues, letter after interminable letter, sputter after sputter, whimper after whimper, to evade: Is he for or against the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act? Is he for or against American membership in the International Trade Organization? If he is for them, why was Truman's speech so dreadful? If he is against them, how would he organize America's trading relations with the rest of the world?

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.
New York City

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Author's Reply

To the Editor of Commentary:

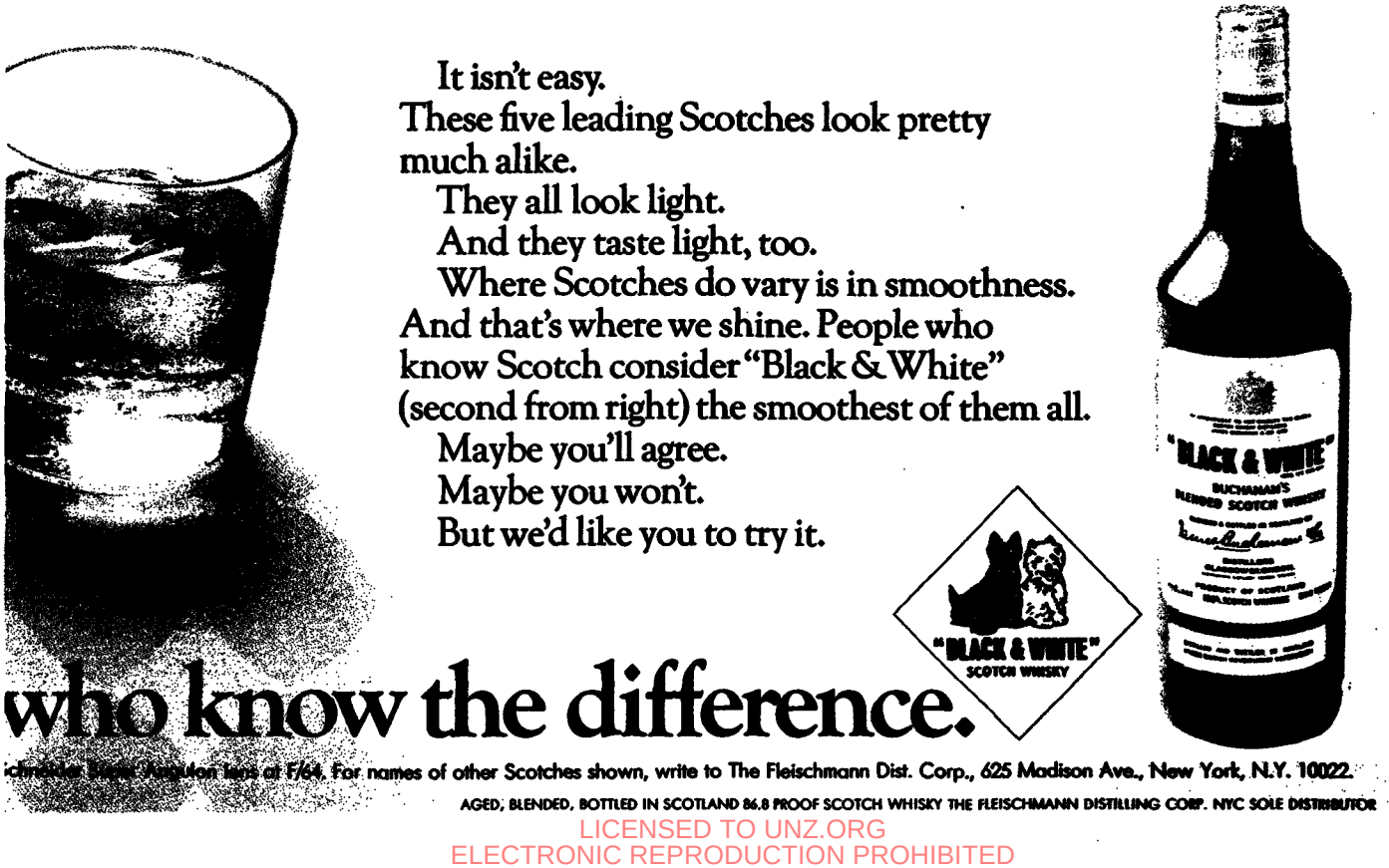
Adam Walinsky's comments [Letters from Readers, May] on my article, "Kennedyism" [January], compel reply—if only because their author employs the wiliest of all polemical gambits: announcing himself duty-bound to set the record straight without the benefit of my unmatchable gift for "personal sniping, cutting, and condescending invective." Now the article, to be sure, makes strong charges, but nowhere in it is there even a hint either of invective or recourse to that which is usually understood by the word "personal." Along the way, not particularly kind things were said of Mr. Walinsky himself. If *that* is what he means by invective, however, one can only conclude—in an era in which men have risked being called "racist" or "opportunist" for, say, the least expression of skepticism about the current slogans of the progressive-minded (even, yes, even at the hands of Mr. Walinsky)—that he has led a most fortunately sheltered life.

But, as Mr. Walinsky might nobly say, enough of this small unpleasantness, let us to the grand substance of our argument. First, Mr. Walinsky's letter indirectly makes the point that Robert Kennedy would have been the best candidate for President. I quite agree. His election would have signalled an unambiguous mandate to shut down the war and might, moreover, have succeeded in holding together for a little while longer the fragile coalition of the Democratic party. And this latter, while far from the last best hope of mankind, might possibly have done a little something to damp the hot winds of our going *Kulturkampf*.

As for the rest, as Mr. Walinsky himself concedes, we are left once more in the realm of intention. Mr. Walinsky's argument that millions of poor people, and numerous men of "complex and rigorous" intelligence (like himself) could never have been moved to support a man who had, as I claimed, shown a certain unintelligent carelessness toward the needs and experiences of others, is the sort of cant that no longer suffices to meet the questioning of my nine-year-old son. Since, however, I was attempting a piece of analysis and he, to conduct a political campaign, he has the decided advantage over me here: for this is precisely the kind of cant to which a critic is not, and a practicing politician is, traditionally entitled. My charges against the New Politics—a phrase Mr. Walinsky curiously refrains from mentioning—were:

1) In defining the core of the Negro problem as being the "racism" of White America—*vide* the Kerner Commission Report—the New Politics inevitably, whatever its day-to-day editorial postures, speaks to affairs of the human heart, not to political or economic interests; and thereby transcendingly, and I might add, condescendingly, misleads both black and white.

2) The creation of special black schools, black programs, black admissions policies, black quotas, etc., understood to be, and created for the purpose of being, less demanding than—or if you prefer the polite euphemism now in currency, "different from"—those of whites, seems to me self-evidently the application of special standards of compe-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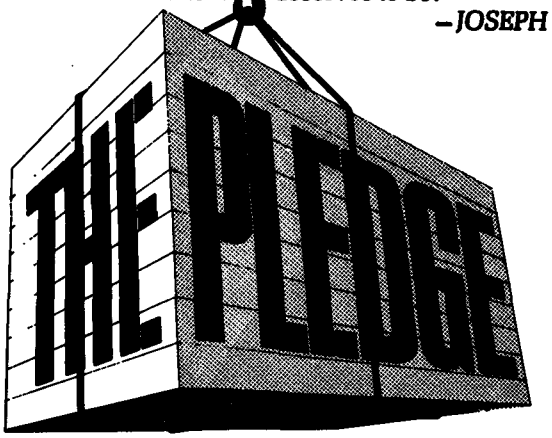

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tence and behavior. The citation of a speech of Robert Kennedy's that the law must be observed may be a heartening piece of moral exhortation, but for anyone interested in understanding the serious social and political implications of a position, I would still offer a goodly dose of D. H. Lawrence: Never trust the teller, trust the tale. As would also be the case with

3) The question of private philanthropy. Exactly how would Mr. Walinsky characterize the Urban Coalition or the Kennedy project in Bedford-Stuyvesant?

4) The fashionable new cry for community control may have bedazzled a number of black bureaucrats with the promise of a little bogus power, but it is in fact the expression of the wish—a reactionary wish, and in those golden days when men of "complex and rigorous" intelligence had a little respect for history, recognized as such—to have one's local demands taken out of that large central sphere where men of political bent are forced to reconcile them with the demands of others.

5) About the conduct of students in our best universities, what is there to argue? Mr. Walinsky somehow implies that if Robert Kennedy were alive, he would address them with courage. If that is so, our loss is all the more keen. It says nothing, however—I call Mr. Walinsky to a bit of elementary logic—about what the students are really demanding.

Finally, in Mr. Walinsky's heartfelt and touching prayer for a better world with which he concludes his letter, I am sure that men of good will everywhere can only join him, as I do most heartily. And wish him good luck in his forthcoming campaign for election.

MIDGE DECTER

New York City

Svetlana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was appalled by Philip Rahv's review of Svetlana Alliluyeva's *Only One Year* [Books in Review, March]. No, *embarrassed* is a better word. Some inner compulsion seems to have prevented Mr. Rahv from attempting to understand either the character of Svetlana's temperament or the nature of her experience.

Miss Alliluyeva's memoir need not be comparable in literary brilliance or depth of consciousness

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with Tolstoy or Herzen in order to qualify as an often sensitive, sometimes touching, generally revealing personal testament. Miss Alliluyeva is no doubt fully to blame for her failure to have acquired Mr. Rahv's intellectual prerequisites. It is unfortunate, historically as well as morally and psychologically, that Stalin did not have a daughter of compelling genius . . . but does not the significance of Svetlana's memoir lie precisely in the revelation of her attitudes, impressions, preferences, and prejudices, *however unsophisticated*? To chide her for the naiveté of her politics or the obsolescence of her religious views is surely an *irrelevant* criticism, in the most exact sense of that word.

Mr. Rahv's critique is often simply cruel. No doubt, a desire for anonymity is not a primary motivation for writing a book. But I see no excuse for this from Mr. Rahv: "For Svetlana to push herself forward and play the role of a celebrity after all that her vicious father had wrought is nothing more than blatant self-indulgence, a piece of inordinate egotism, sheer *chutzpah* in fact." Only a malicious reading of the book and a total rejection of the evidence of Svetlana's own fundamental shyness could produce such an insensitive accusation. . . .

ROBERT M. JOHNSTONE, JR.
Ithaca, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I suspect Mr. Rahv is using Svetlana as an excuse for an argument with Edmund Wilson. . . . The fact is that Svetlana does know about life under Communism, and she tells the truth about what she saw and heard, and tells it well. It is Mr. Rahv who has the *chutzpah* to tell her to "retire" from life because her father was evil. . . . He finds other faults in "the princess" as well: she does not explain the difference between Communism and democratic socialism; how many commentators and professors do? She does not like the hippies; neither do I. . . .

But Mr. Rahv's overall objection to Svetlana is for her acceptance of America "as if it were Utopia achieved, a veritable paradise on earth." Well, everything is relative. . . . With all our shortcomings, all our tragedies, all our stupid actions, nationally and internationally, our country is still a "paradise" compared with Russia. . . .

SOL FEINSTONE
Washington Crossing, Pa.

MR. RAHV writes:

In writing about Svetlana's second book as I did, I realized of course I would be mortally offending both the die-hard cold warriors and the American patriot-eers. Mr. Feinstone does accept—and joyfully at that—Svetlana's paradisiacal picture of America. I suggest that he read the daily papers and watch the gyrations of Nixon, Mitchell & Co. As for explaining the difference between Russian Communism and democratic socialism, many dozens of commentators have done exactly that. For Svetlana to write what is essentially a political book while ignoring alternative systems, such as democratic socialism, is simply a scandal.

As for Mr. Johnstone's missive, I am certain that he understands nothing whatever about Svetlana's temperament or even the nature of her experience. What she explicitly says in her book is one thing; but what she says between the lines is something else again. The only reason her books are published is that she is Stalin's daughter. She lacks both political and general culture, and what she tells us about conditions in Russia has been well known for many years. As for Mr. Edmund Wilson's praise of her, it strikes me as a mystification pure and simple. And much as I admire Mr. Wilson as a literary critic, I cannot accept his implicit degradation of such giants as Herzen, Tolstoy, and Kropotkin by favorably comparing Svetlana's cold-war production with their work.

Only Money

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

John Lukacs's "The Paradox of Prosperity" [February] misrepresents the nature of modern economics. Mr. Lukacs criticizes economics for faults it does not have and commits numerous slips in economic analysis.

To be sure, it is not clear just what Mr. Lukacs thinks economists believe. Do we still employ the 18th-century notion that only tangible goods are products? Do we still accept the Benthamite

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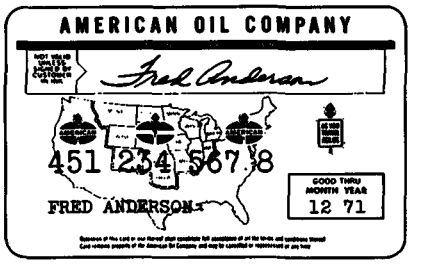

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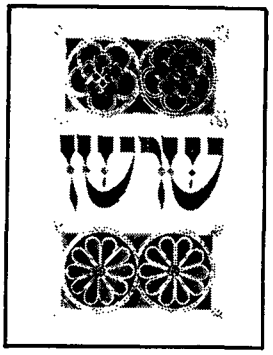

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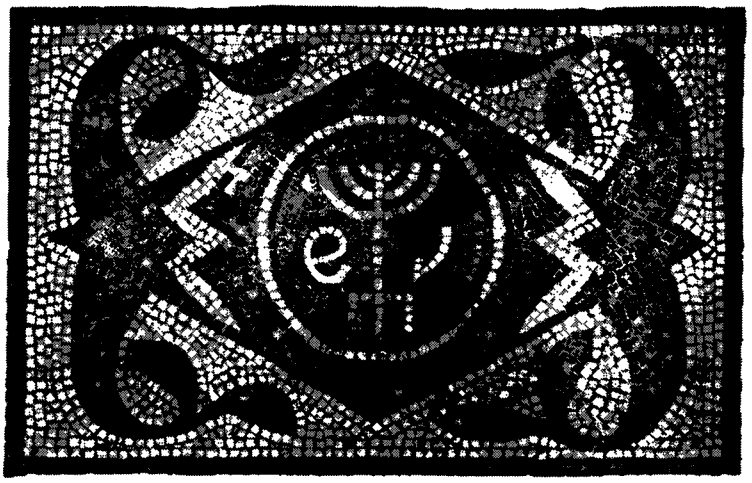

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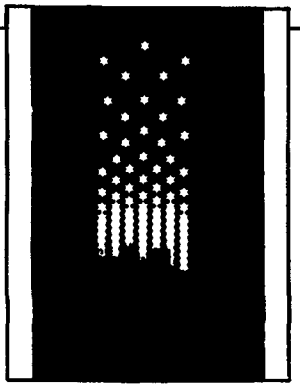

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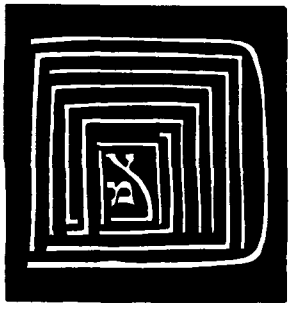

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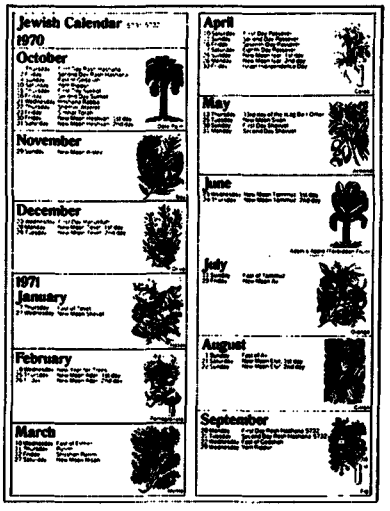

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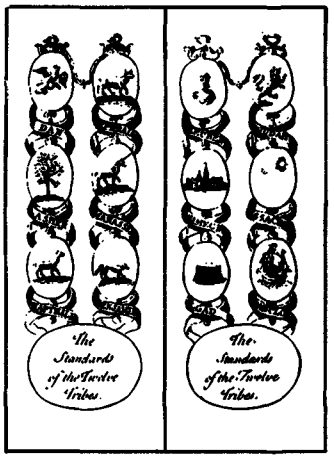

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view that physical usefulness is all that counts? Do we believe that only private consumption matters? The first two concepts died long ago and Mr. Lukacs would be well advised to abandon his attachment to them (e.g., his comments on marketing costs and the GNP). The third is used only to simplify the explanation of economic theory for beginners. . . .

My first quarrel with Mr. Lukacs's economics involves his statements about the relations among value, rarity, durability, and craftsmanship. The most fundamental principle of economics is that price *always* reflects the interaction of rarity (i.e., the ease of reproduction) with the intensity of demand. Clearly, more durable versions of a given product are more expensive to produce and so generally have higher values. Thus, the changes Mr. Lukacs describes simply cannot exist. If he is arguing merely that durability and craftsmanship are no longer profitable, why doesn't he say so? He also leaves out the role here of rising labor costs. Craftsmanship has been pushed out of existence because, with present real wages, it costs more than it is worth to consumers. Rising repair costs often make replacement a cheaper alternative. . . .

Finally, we turn to Mr. Lukacs's recitation of monetary ideas usually heard only from elderly bankers or gold and silver producers. By careful selection of periods, he has made inflation seem a new development; in fact, however, inflation has existed for centuries, and the episode of falling prices in the 19th century which Mr. Lukacs cites was an unusual occurrence (and, as protest movements at the time attest, was hardly considered a universal blessing). . . . The recent inflation, of course, resulted from failures of overall policy, not from the demonetization of silver. Moreover, our coinage has long been based upon controlled scarcity rather than intrinsic value. The face value was kept well above the value of the metal to isolate the money supply from extraneous influences caused by gyrations of the metal market. Demonetization occurred precisely because this insulation could no longer be maintained. . . .

RICHARD L. GORDON
College of Earth and
Mineral Sciences
Pennsylvania State University

MR. LUKACS writes:

My article was a chapter from a forthcoming book dealing with the decay of various fields of modern civilization. I had hoped to receive some enlightening comments from economists. Unfortunately I received none. The letter by Professor Gordon confirms my original suspicion to the effect that economics has become mere theory. It concerns itself with abstract methods of computability. Professor Gordon argues that I am not up to date with the recent categories of the latter. Of course I am not. My very point was that the monstrous figure of a thing such as the Gross National Product is but a gross and fictitious number produced from the ever-changing categories conceived by economists themselves. It is nothing more and nothing less than a mental construction—which, indeed, is the original meaning of the Latin word *fictio*.

Pop Culture

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am sorry that Alfred Kazin, in "Whatever Happened to Criticism" [February], thinks I am—or was—an exponent of "rhetorical, 'apocalyptic,' radicalism." I am not now, nor was I ever, a radical of any kind. The piece from which he takes the quotation to support that remark was written in 1964 (not the 1950's, as he said) and though it chided the better-known critics for not extending serious consideration to such writers as Thomas Berger, Walker Percy, John Barth, Ken Kesey, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., it was not intended as an attack on literature as a system of values or as a defense of popular culture and the values it, in its way, espouses. What I was trying to do was suggest that popular culture has become such a pervasive influence in everybody's life that it must be dealt with by the serious novelist today, much as Dickens dealt with the industrial revolution in his day. It seemed to me then, and it seems to me today, that the writer who makes use of pop culture as material—and such use may well include the adoption of some of its rhythms and idioms in his prose style—runs quite a serious risk of being ignored by critics more intent upon defending "literature" than they are in reading it intelligently.

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In a portion of the piece Mr. Kazin did not quote I suggested that the critical community "try to find the words by which this writing can be apprehended, discussed, and finally criticized in terms appropriate to it. The alternative is both too easy and too irresponsible." Six years later we see some of the results of the failure to find these words. Barth and Kesey have, in different ways, freaked out and are apparently lost to traditional literary culture. Percy and Berger have their cults, but there is almost no worthwhile critical discussion about their work; Vonnegut has been taken up by the youth culture, which finds him "groovy," but does not, I think, "read" him in a critical sense that either Mr. Kazin or I would understand. I do not think any of these writers, incidentally, is anti-literature; they all employ words too carefully (at their best anyway), and in the service of the humanistic tradition, to be thought of that way. In short, I think one of the reasons criticism lacks influence today is because of a failure to respond positively to a number of very promising writers who came along in the 50's and 60's, of whom there were many more than the few named here. About their work one did not so much want to read an outpouring of praise as a genuine engagement with what they were attempting.

Since writing the piece Mr. Kazin quoted I have spent a good deal of time reviewing movies. In that work I have become all too aware of the general tendencies he so eloquently and rightly condemns. This barbarous gabble about the "media," this dismal parlor McLuhanism, this wretched politicization of art—are all attempts, it seems to me, by illiterate people to destroy—or at least to downgrade—art, which is, of course, a fundamentally undemocratic thing, by no means available to everyone and least of all to the present arbiters of culture: film producers, television directors, ad agency "creative people." It is precisely because I so profoundly agree with Mr. Kazin's basic argument that I so deeply regret being trotted out as a horrid example of what he—and I—deplore. . . .

RICHARD SCHICKEL

New York City

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Beginning with the present number, NORMAN PODHORETZ, *editor of* COMMENTARY *and author of* Doings and Undoings *and* Making It, *will be conducting this new monthly department of comment on a wide variety of topical issues. The opinions Mr. Podhoretz expresses here are his own, and are not to be taken as expressions of editorial policy.*

Reflections on Earth Day

Norman Podhoretz

"CONSERVATIVES were for it," reported the New York *Times*. "Liberals were for it. Democrats, Republicans, and independents were for it. So were the ins, the outs, the Executive and legislative branches of Government. It was Earth Day, and, like Mother's Day, no man in public office could be against it." Virtually no one out of public office was against it either. On the Right, to be sure, the Daughters of the American Revolution, reassuringly continuing to play their accustomed role at a time when so many others perversely refuse to do so, announced that the subversives, having made a successful assault on our colleges, were now going after our parks. On the Left, a few activists were muttering darkly but not very loudly (for fear of alienating their troops in the counter-culture whose paranoia had been lying in wait for just such ultimate confirmation as the idea that "they" were actually poisoning us), that the whole issue of the environment represented a maneuver to distract the national attention from Vietnam and the problems of the blacks. In the Center, there was a contemporary of mine who said sourly that Earth Day reminded him of the vanished Arbor Days of our youth, those annual occasions when schoolchildren all over the country, most of whom, like my friend, did not discover what the word "arbor" meant until they reached adulthood, were sent out for some reason to plant a tree. But these exceptions were definitely exceptions. Earth Day signified the acquiescence of most Americans in the idea that a crisis of dire proportions is upon us and that time is running out on our ability to do something about it.

I myself remain to be convinced that the crisis is of this apocalyptic dimension, and I see no evidence of any widespread awareness of what would be required to deal with it if it were. Behind how many of those smiling faces photographed on an automobile-free Fifth Avenue, for example, lay the realization that if their assessment of the peril we face should turn out to be accurate, we would all have to go largely without heat in the winter, not to mention a million other things produced by the burning of fuel that we now take innocently for granted?

But whatever the true character and extent of the problem, I find myself wondering about the political implications of its successful reification as an issue. Some of the idiot young and those of their elders who, seeing their own idiocy so handsomely reflected in these healthy and supple bodies, narcissistically praise it as wisdom and idealism, think that in pollution we have an issue at last transcending politics. But there is no such issue in public life, and anyone who believes there is merely volunteers himself as ideological cannon fodder to be used by those whose political interests are furthered by precisely the idea that issues transcending politics exist. In other countries, it has generally been the aristocracy whose political interests have been served by this idea. In America it is the class which most closely approximates a native aristocracy—the WASP patriciate. The environment, I would suggest, is the issue on which the WASP patriciate (recently pronounced by Peter Schrag in *Harper's* to be in decline just when it is becoming more militantly vigorous than ever) hopes to reassert its primacy in general and, in particular, to recapture the Republican party and the White House from the forces that now hold them both in such precarious captivity.

THE WASP patriciate is of course well represented within the Democratic party, but its true home is in the Republican party where it is generally known as the Eastern Establishment. A hundred years ago, when the ancestors of these people felt themselves being dislodged from their rightful place of preeminence in the American Republic by the new money of the Gilded Age acting in political collaboration with the newly arrived immigrant hordes, some of them responded by sulking in their silken tents and hurling elegantly sardonic imprecations at an unredeemable polity now giving itself over to the vulgarities of a self-seeking materialism. The father of this breed was Henry Adams, and his descendants today are to be found, for example, among the backers and associates of the radical intellectuals of Jewish origin who run the *New York Review of Books* and whose radicalism, such as it is, consists entirely of preserving and enlarging the heritage of hatred for America to which both groups, each for reasons of its own, have dedicated their lives and their fortunes and their sacred honor.

But there was also another

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strain of WASP patrician in the Gilded Age, less sickly, more robust. The father of this breed was Theodore Roosevelt, who decided to go into public life and fight for possession of the country instead of playing the role of Thersites which was adopted by the "men in the clubs of social pretension and the men of cultivated taste and easy life," as Roosevelt himself described the class from which he came. Today Roosevelt's spiritual progeny—who by now include descendants of such hated Robber Barons as Rockefeller himself, transformed through a familiar historical alchemy into patricians by the mere passage of time—exercise their political influence through organizations like the Council on Foreign Relations and the Urban Coalition. In 1964 they were humiliated by a new crop of Robber Barons who used Barry Goldwater to take over control of the Republican party; in 1968 they were again humiliated by the same forces, this time operating through Richard Nixon. Now they are readying themselves either to challenge those forces in 1972 if things should go badly for Nixon, or to succeed them in 1976 with a candidate of their own who will be presented, just as their last successful candidate was in 1952, as a man above politics and above party. I would guess from the regularity with which Tom Wicker, James Reston, and their colleagues on the editorial page of the New York *Times* have been puffing and pushing John W. Gardner in the past year or two (scarcely a day goes by, it seems, without some incredibly platitudinous piety uttered by Mr. Gardner being cited somewhere on the *Times*'s editorial page as evidence of the profundity of his social thought) that he is probably the current front-runner in the race for that candidacy, especially since John Lindsay's clumsy handling of the New York school strike all but eliminated him from contention.

MR. GARDNER, of course, has identified himself very prominently with the issue of the environment, linking it for good measure in his own person as head of the Urban Coalition with the other major area of concern in the nation's domestic life. There is no need to believe that either he or the forces behind him are being in the least bit cynical in promoting a sense of crisis over the issue of the environment. Richard Nixon may well have been led by just such an uncharitable view of the matter into his effort to head them off by claiming the issue as his own, but the truth is that the environment —or conservation, as it used to be called before it graduated into the apocalyptic status it now enjoys—has since the days of Theodore Roosevelt himself been a cause dear to the hearts of the WASP patricians. It is an issue which focuses in a very precise and uniquely poignant way their perennial protest against what they have always seen as the despoliation of the national estate by the selfish interests that were enthroned in the Gilded Age. That these interests were enthroned at the political expense of the WASP patriciate has never seemed to it a reason for suspecting that an element of the self-servingly tendentious might have entered into its assessment of the situation, for in its own eyes the WASP patriciate has no selfish interests. Its only interest, it devoutly believes, is the Public Interest, and it sees itself as the only group in the country which has only the Public Interest at heart. But of course it does in fact have selfish interests, the desire to govern the rest of us being the main one, and it is in the service of that interest that the proclamation of an environmental crisis of apocalyptic proportions seems to be working. If the feeling that such a crisis is upon us should become sufficiently exacerbated, it could lead to the clamor for a President above politics. At that point Mr. Gardner, or someone else very like him, will be ready, while Gaylord Nelson, the Democratic Senator who invented Earth Day, will possibly never know for whose political benefit he was laboring all the time.

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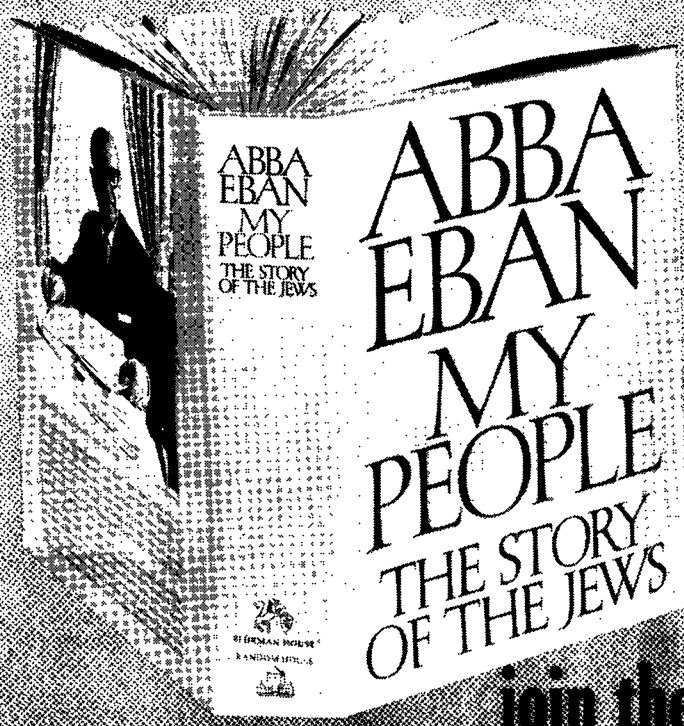

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The Palestinians and Israel

Shlomo Avineri

When I was a child, I used to go with my late father for long walks around the Valley of Jezreel. We used to meet Arabs, and they, especially in the winter, covered their heads with their kafiyas, *so that only their noses and eyes remained visible. My father, who was not born in the country—he came from Russia at the age of seventeen—used to say: "Look, they have the look of murderers." But these Arabs were not murderers, they were simple* fellahin, *and because it was cold and rainy they covered their heads with their* kafiya *and* agal *and of all their face you saw nothing but a nose and glistening eyes—which to me seemed dark and beautiful. My father, on the other hand, imagined that he saw through the* kafiya *the looks he recalled from his* shtetl *in Russia.*

—Moshe Dayan, in a speech
in Jaffa, February 14, 1969

THREE YEARS have now passed since the Six-Day War, and there seems to be no end in sight to the impasse into which it has led Israeli-Arab relations. In the summer of 1967 hope was in the air: most Israelis shared the belief, nurtured by a mixture of naiveté and arrogance, that the war had finally opened the door to peace. If before June 1967 most Arabs had believed that Israel could be easily defeated, the Six-Day War—so the reasoning went—proved that Israel was here to stay. Hence, the argument continued, the Arabs would now realize that they had no choice but to cut their losses and pursue an alternative, and to them less costly, policy. In return for peace, i.e., recognition on the part of the Arabs of the legitimacy of Israel, Israel had quite a formidable package to exchange: the territories she had captured from Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.

We all know better now. The net gain of the 1967 war was not a diminishing of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but rather an intensification of it. However the war may have affected the political consciousness of the Arabs, it certainly did not reconcile them to the existence of Israel, nor did the prowess of the Israeli armed forces cow them into submission. Those Israelis who in the past had been accustomed to assert that the only language the Arabs understand is the language of force, proved to be as wrong as ever. Humiliation breeds stubbornness, and the very fact of Israel's victory served only to widen the chasm between her and the Arabs. The dialectic of the self-fulfilling prophecy was at work again. Israel could beat her breast in genuine innocence, proclaim that she had no expansionist aims, that she had been pushed into a corner by the Arabs in May 1967, and that consequently she had to strike back in despair and self-defense. But do not the Israelis now control, as a result of the war, the whole area from Kuneitra to Kantara, from Mt. Hermon to the Suez, and do not Israeli leaders make it clear that a return to the frontiers of June 5, 1967, is quite unthinkable? As Cecil Hourani so pointedly tried to tell his fellow Arabs, their total rejection of Israel had consistently redounded to Israel's advantage. Had they accepted the UN partition plan in 1947, a much smaller Israel, and one with a sizable Arab minority at that, would have been established alongside a more populous Palestinian Arab state; similarly, had they not rocked the boat in 1967, Israel would still be encased in her precarious borders of 1949, with a narrow waistline around Natanya, with Jerusalem still half in Jordanian hands, and with Eilat rather than Sharm el-Sheikh as Israel's southernmost point.

Another unforeseen consequence of the Six-Day War has been that Israel, which was formerly an abstraction to most Arabs, has now become concrete and real to many Arabs who could not have cared less about the Jewish state—or about the Palestinians—before 1967. The ongoing war of attrition reaches deep into Arab territory; Israel's forces are stationed on the Suez Canal; her planes regularly penetrate the Egyptian heartland; the industrial complex of Port Said-Ismailia-Port Suez is in shambles. And contrary to Israeli hopes, the Arabs have reacted to this newly imposed realization of Israel's existence not by recognizing it as fact, let alone by granting that fact legitimacy; rather, the "reality" of Israel has served to mobilize support for the continuing war against her. The average Egyptian, even if he generally supported the anti-Israeli policies of Nasser, had very little stake in the conflict prior to 1967; now that the war has reached Port Said—if not Cairo itself—his feelings about the matter are more

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acute. Moreover, now that Nasser has succeeded in involving the Sudanese and Libyan military regimes in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the geographical as well as the politico-psychological scope of the conflict has become considerably enlarged.

Finally, there are the Palestinians, who in the two decades between 1949 and 1967 were subsumed under the various Arab states, but who now, due to the inability of the Arab governments not only to regain for the Palestinians their lost home, but even to defend their *own* borders, have come to the fore as an almost independent element in the conflict. To be sure, Palestinian guerrillas had been operating for several years before 1967; but during that time they were totally subservient to the various Arab governments that subsidized them. Thus, the Palestine Liberation Organization was an adjunct of Egyptian foreign policy, while *Al Fatah* was organized by the Syrian intelligence services. Since 1967, however, the *fedayeen* have become an autonomous power, far more active against Israel than before the war, dictating their own terms to the Jordanian and Lebanese governments; by now, even Nasser has to be careful not to alienate them completely.

These guerrilla organizations have so far shown no signs of succeeding in their aim of dislodging Israel from the occupied territories and destroying her as a state, and there is no reason to believe that in the future they will be more successful than hitherto. Nevertheless, to Israel's dismay, it is the Palestinians who have done the greatest damage to her world image; those who supported Israel wholeheartedly when she was menaced by Nasser's Egypt and when sixty million Arabs threatened to push her into the sea, tend to think differently now that the enemy has become defined as a band of people claiming to fight for the liberation of what they consider their homeland from foreign intruders. Nor is this the only achievement of the Palestinians; by conducting raids across the Jordan, by continuing to wage a war of terrorism against Israel after the massive Arab defeat in 1967, the Palestinians have kept the conflict open and have prevented both the solidification of the ceasefire lines into mutually accepted, semi-permanent frontiers, and the emergence of an accommodation between Israel and at least some of the Arab regimes.

The ideology of the Palestinian organizations has hardened since 1967—a development not usually noticed in the West, where the Palestinian propaganda machine, having learned that the rhetoric of genocide does not pay, is now trying to convey quite the opposite image of the guerrillas. Before 1967, the Palestine Liberation Organization was ready, at least on paper, to allow those Jews who had entered Palestine before 1948 to remain in the country after the destruction of Israel was accomplished. Now, according to the Palestinian National Covenant, as amended by the Fourth Palestinian Council in Cairo in July 1968, similar rights will be accorded only to those Jews who were in Palestine in 1917. All others will not be considered "Palestinians" and will have no place in the country after the destruction of Israel. Anyone taken in by *Fatah* propaganda about a secular Palestine, in which "Moslems, Christians, and Jews" will live peacefully side by side, should be reminded that most of the 2,500,000 Jews of Israel would be excluded from such a state. To an even greater degree than other Arab communities, the Palestinians have become more, not less, extreme since 1967.

THE CONFLICT is thus very much with us. But what sometimes disappears under the newspaper headlines and the daily flux of events in the Middle East is the nature of the conflict itself, and it is to this topic that I wish to turn now. It is perhaps easiest to begin by trying to explain what the conflict is *not*. Despite appearances, it is not—and never was—a struggle between the two Great Powers, though the powers have always had a stake in it. This statement may at first glance seem fantastic, especially at a time when the Arab-Israeli conflict has taken on the classical visage of an overt arms race and when on the one hand Israel is portrayed by the Soviets and the Arabs as the spearhead of U.S. imperialism, and on the other hand some of Israel's friends in America try to present her as the best ally the U.S. and Western democracy have ever had in the Middle East. Yet despite all this, the Middle East conflict has never truly been susceptible of analysis in cold-war terms.

At the risk of restating the obvious, let us examine the positions adopted by the Great Powers in each of the three outbreaks of war between Israel and the Arab states (1948, 1956, 1967). The UN proposal of 1947, that the British-mandated territory of Palestine be partitioned into a Jewish and an Arab state, was supported *jointly* by the USSR and the U.S. When the State of Israel declared its independence on May 15, 1948, the only arms at its disposal (aside from those stolen from the British) came from Czechoslovakia, and were delivered in token of Soviet support for Israel—a fact now conveniently forgotten by both the Soviets and the Arabs, and, on occasion, even by some Zionists. Not only did Israel not receive any arms from the West, the U.S. went so far as to declare an embargo on arms shipments to the Middle East, which, though intended to be nonpartisan, in effect worked against Israel alone.

Both the USSR and the U.S. granted immediate diplomatic recognition to Israel, but whereas the Soviet recognition was *de jure*, the Americans limited themselves for the first year of Israel's existence to mere *de facto* recognition. In the summer of 1948, when the Soviet and American envoys arrived in Tel Aviv, only one hotel (the Käte Dan) was considered fit to house foreign dignitaries of such stature; so the Hammer and

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Sickle and the Stars and Stripes were displayed side by side on the hotel front—an unusual sight in 1948, the year of the Czech *coup d'état* and the Berlin blockade. Soviet spokesmen, including the present Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, waxed eloquent over the right of the Jews to their ancient homeland, condemned (with customary Soviet vehemence) the Arab attack on Israel, and called upon the Arabs to abide by UN decisions. It was Harry Truman who in the spring of 1948 appeared ambivalent over the partition question, and who for a time entertained the idea of some form of UN trusteeship and of scrapping the Jewish state altogether. At one stage during the war of 1948, Ben-Gurion decided to make public the names of the members of the Israeli General Staff (still kept secret in good conspiratorial fashion); his reason for doing so was to disprove rumors circulating in the Western press to the effect that Russian generals were directing the Israeli war effort: few people in 1948 were prepared to believe that the Jews could fight.

While Israel was thus supported—though in different forms—by *both* the Soviet Union and the United States, the Arab countries drew their support from the British and the French, who were still the paramount powers in the Middle East. Britain had military bases in Egypt and in Iraq, and trained these two countries' armies; Jordan's Arab Legion was even commanded by regular British army officers, headed by Brig.-Gen. Sir John Glubb Pasha. Syria and Lebanon were still very much under French influence. Late in the 1948-49 war, when Israeli forces penetrated a few miles into Sinai, a British ultimatum was dispatched to Israel, and British aircraft were sent in to convey to the Israelis that Britain would not tolerate any closer approach to the Suez Canal and its installations. The Israelis shot down five British Spitfires, but then Ben-Gurion (always the first among Israeli leaders to give in to foreign pressure) ordered a hasty withdrawal.

The mixed pattern of Great Power support for the local belligerents in this early period can be easily explained; in the years immediately after 1945, the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine was the only force in the Middle East fighting British imperialism and actively engaged in the attempt to dislodge England from the area. In restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine, even in the face of the emergency created by the Holocaust, Britain was catering to the wishes of its Arab client-states, for the Arab regimes—King Farouk in Egypt, Nuri Said in Iraq, Emir Abdullah in what was then Transjordan—were the instruments of British policy and the mainstays of British support in the Middle East. Obviously, then, the Soviets backed the only group, tiny and weak as it might then have seemed, which was trying to oust the British altogether. U.S. support for Israel was of a different order: in part it could be traced to bad conscience after the Holocaust, in part to the influence of the Jewish vote on a Democratic administration, and in still another part to a combination of idealistic enthusiasm for a new, vigorous, and democratic country and the shrewd calculation that the establishment of a Jewish state might lessen the pressures on the U.S. to admit Jewish refugees from Europe (the British were not altogether incorrect in their oblique references to the outright cynicism of some American demands for allowing Jewish immigration into Palestine). In no case was U.S. support motivated by any grand design of American foreign policy: the State Department was against the recognition of Israel,* and the American oil interests of course strongly supported the Arabs and opposed Israel (as they still do today).

By 1956, the picture had changed completely. Britain and France, anti-Israel in 1948, now supported Israel, and in the case of France even egged her on. The French at the time were engaged in a war in Algeria, where the FLN was heavily dependent upon Nasser's support. Both British and French interests had been substantially damaged by the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal. With the emergence in the Arab world of nationalist anti-Western regimes like Nasser's, the Soviet Union had switched its support to the Arab cause, and the United States, though generally supporting Israel, opposed her and the French-English-Israeli alliance on the specific issue of Israel's war with Egypt in 1956. After the Sinai campaign, the U.S., together with the Soviet Union, put pressure on Israel to withdraw from Sinai without first having achieved peace terms. In 1956, then, as in 1948, the Soviet Union and the United States took the same line, the only difference being that in 1948 the line was pro-Israel, whereas in 1956 it was pro-Arab.

In 1967 the kaleidoscope pieces fell into yet another pattern: while the Soviet Union continued to support the Arabs, U.S. support for Israel (though hedged, especially on account of America's interest in Jordan) was stronger than ever before; France now abandoned its 1956 marriage of convenience (or, rather, concubinage) with Israel and reverted to its 1948 position of support for the Arabs; and Britain, though generally behind Israel, was much more lukewarm about it than in 1956. Britain clearly wished to emerge from the 1967 war as a possible honest broker in subsequent negotiations, although its eyes, of course, were also on the vestiges of British influence in the Arab countries.

Over the past twenty years, then, the great powers have repeatedly switched their basic positions

* George Kennan's remarks on this subject in his *Memoirs, 1925-1950* are typical of the anti-Israeli attitude then prevalent in many circles of the government, and especially in the State Department. Quite a lot of this tradition is still alive and kicking in Foggy Bottom.

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and have played a complicated game of musical chairs with both sides in the Middle East conflict, yet the conflict is still there and still somehow involves none of the Great Powers directly.* Unlike all other post-1945 disputes, in which the roots of discord may always be seen to lie in the clash of Western vs. Soviet (or Chinese) policy, in the Arab-Israeli conflict Great Power rivalry is a secondary and derivative factor. The same can be said of ideological differences: there are probably more Marxists in Israel than in the whole of the Arab world, but the Soviet Union could not care less about that. Nor is it of any importance that in most Arab countries (including Egypt) Communist parties are outlawed and individual Communists rot in jail, whereas Israel is blessed with *two* Communist parties, both of them represented in the Knesset. Nothing along such lines could be envisaged in Korea, Berlin, Cuba, or Vietnam.

THE REAL conflict in the Middle East is not between the Great Powers, nor is it a conflict between imperialism and anti-colonialism, or between "democracy" and "Communism." Basically and ultimately it is a conflict between two movements for national liberation. Both of these movements are relative newcomers to political consciousness; both are internally problematical; both movements have suffered from a series of historical traumas; both are terribly unsure of themselves and groping toward self-identity. On top of everything else, both the Jewish and the Arab national movements lay claim to the same piece of land, historic Palestine, *Eretz Israel*—though for the Arabs, of course, Palestine is just one part of the great Arab homeland, while the Jewish national movement claims only *Eretz Israel* as its patrimony.

Though Jews and Arabs have been around for millennia, it was only in the last decades of the 19th century that a secular national movement emerged among either of them. And among both Arabs and Jews, this movement arose in response to challenges from the external society and to the impact of these challenges on the society itself. Zionism, in the case of the Jews, was a response to the secularization of Jewish life and to the emergence of national movements and ethnically-conscious nation-states in Eastern and Central Europe. In the case of the Arabs, the contact between the Ottoman Empire and the West, as well as the emergence of a secular, ethnic nationalism among the Turkish ruling group—a development that threatened to transform the Ottoman Empire from the religious home of the Believers (*Dar al-Islam*) into a secular state based on the ethnic superiority of the Turks—served to make the Arabs aware of their own ethnic and linguistic heritage as against that of the Ottoman Turks. Though in its later stages Arab nationalism took for its main target the Western colonial powers, its initial impetus was directed in opposition to the ruling Turks, and both the British and the French were welcomed by Arab nationalists as disrupters of the old Ottoman Empire. It was as an ally of Arab nationalism that the West appeared among the Arabs—and "West" in this context includes also the American missionaries who founded the American University in Beirut, and whose efforts were directed toward making Christian Arabs conscious of their secular Arabism in order to weaken their connection with the Islamic Empire of the Turks and hence to win another battle in the Christian war against the infidels.

Arab spokesmen these days tend to emphasize the support given the Zionist movement by the British through the Balfour Declaration; they tend to forget, however, that at the same time that British diplomats were seeking the support of Jewish nationalism against the Turks and the Germans, British agents were aiding the Arab revolt against the Turks in the Hedjaz; for every Balfour there was a T. E. Lawrence. In point of fact, both national movements, the Jewish and the Arab, made ample use of any support they could get. In 1917, both had a common enemy—the Turks—and both had a common ally—the British. That it was naive, if not cynical, of the British to believe that they could play both cards simultaneously, attests to nothing other than the narrow-mindedness of those British statesmen who liked to pooh-pooh the impact of nationalism generally—that is, until nationalism blew the British Empire out of existence. But in 1917, at least, the leaders of the two national movements still believed that they could arrive at a common platform, as the short-lived agreement between Chaim Weizmann and King Feisal shows. Inexplicable as it may now seem, none other than Haj Amin el-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem and latter-day collaborator with the Nazis in the "Final Solution," was among the participants at the dedication ceremonies of the Hebrew University; his name appears among the signatories of a document buried in the university's cornerstone.

Both the Jewish and the Arab national movements were faced with a similar social problem; one that took the form of a lopsided social structure. But in their approch to this problem the two movements took separate paths, and it is in this divergence that one can locate the essential distinction between Jewish and Arab nationalism. For while it is possible to maintain that the Jewish national movement succeeded in combining a national revolution with a social one, the Arab movement remained almost exclusively political; an Arab social revolution, indeed, has yet to be undertaken. The successful synthesis of the social and political realms gave Zionism its peculiar dynamism and strength, whereas the purely political

* The above was written prior to the recent disclosure of Soviet air activity in Egypt. Disquieting as this development may be, it does not substantially affect the thrust of my argument here.

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nature of Arab nationalism, in Palestine as well as elsewhere, is at the root of its present tragic dilemma.*

The Jewish problem, as it was defined by Zionism, was not merely territorial in nature, nor did Zionism aim only at a geographical concentration of Jewish people in Palestine. From the start Zionist theorists realized that the creation of a social infra-structure for a Jewish national home in Palestine would require a radical restructuring of Jewish social life as it had evolved in the Diaspora, where almost all Jews had been pushed into the ranks of the middle classes; there was in the Diaspora no Jewish peasantry, and hardly a Jewish proletariat. Nation-building, therefore, involved the creation of a Jewish working class and a Jewish peasantry in Palestine—in other words, the overall development of a differentiated social structure. Jewish immigration to Palestine was structurally different from Jewish immigration to the United States, England, or South America; those who left Eastern Europe to make a new home in the West did so in hopes of achieving a higher status in society, but Jewish immigration to Palestine represented *the only intentionally downwardly mobile social movement ever experienced in the history of immigration.* The typical *halutz* was a young middle-class Jew, usually quite well-educated for the circumstances of his age and society, who in going to Palestine turned his back both on the Diaspora and on bourgeois society, and set out to find personal and communal redemption by becoming a worker or a peasant.

In Zionism, then, social vision went hand in hand with nationalism; Zionism could succeed only insofar as it was combined with socialism. Hence the strongly socialist bias of Israel, hence the *kibbutzim, kvutzot,* and *moshavim,* hence the establishment of the Histadrut not as a mere trade-union organization, but as a Society of Laborers (*Hevrat Ovdim*), owning industries, paramount in the economic field, leaving its impact on all spheres of Israeli life; hence the hegemony of the labor movement in the political life of the *Yishuv,* hence the insistence on Jewish labor. The entire thrust of the Zionist movement was against the creation of a white, *colon*-like society. The facile analogy that is nowadays made between Israel and South Africa or Algeria is pure nonsense: Zionism called for self-reliance, doing one's own labor (*avoda atzmit*), the creation of a Jewish working class, absolute opposition to the exploitation of cheap Arab labor by Jewish settlers —in short, the exact opposite of the economic ideology of French Algeria or present-day South Africa.

IN TURNING our attention to Arab society we find a dilemma similar to that faced by Zionism. One tends to forget that before the British and French established themselves in the Middle East, the Arabs were not a self-governing nation: ever since the 13th century, the Arabs in the Middle East had been ruled by a succession of foreign, albeit Moslem, invaders: Seljuks, Osmanli Turks, Mameluke slaves (in Egypt). Even Saladin, victor over the Crusaders at the Horns of Hittin, was a Kurd, not an Arab. When Arab nationalism emerged triumphant from its confrontation with the West, the Arabs, like the Jews, were essentially lacking in the experience of statehood. But because of the militaristic ethos of Islam—an ethos that harks back to the *Conquista* of the Mediterranean by Islamic Arab warriors in the 7th and 8th centuries—Arab society was also characterized by a strongly anti-commercial orientation; indeed, an urban, commercial middle class scarcely existed among Moslem Arabs. For centuries, the commercial middle classes in Arab society consisted of ethnic and religious minorities: Maronites, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Copts. Arab society was as imbalanced as Jewish society in the Diaspora, though its tilt leaned precisely in the opposite direction.

Very little has been done within the Arab national movement to redress this imbalance, since very little social thought (as distinguished from political ideology) went into the making of Arab nationalism. The greatest trauma suffered by Arab nationalism was the regression of Arab Islamic society from the cultural grandeurs of the High Middle Ages to the dismal backwaters in which Arab society found itself on the threshold of the 20th century, when it came into contact with Europe and found its civilization profoundly inferior to Western culture and technology. In the same way that traditional Islamic thought had paid far less attention to social philosophy than had Christian medieval thought, so modern secular Arab nationalism has consistently stressed political reconstruction at the expense of social reconstruction: according to Arab nationalist ideologies, Arab society would be regenerated once the yoke of Western imperialism was broken. Moreover, the original leaders of the Arab national movement were themselves members of the traditional elites of Arab society, and were naturally disinclined to consider the need for social transformation. Hence the complete and rapid breakdown of the quasi-constitutional political structures left in Arab countries by the departing Western powers,

* The tragic nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict is recognized by most Israeli writers on the subject, a recognition that gives their own nationalism a peculiarly introspective and liberal edge: they are able to perceive the point of view of the other side, even if they do not accept it. Among Arab intellectuals, on the other hand, very few perceive the conflict as tragic or see it as a conflict between *two* claims. One of the most sophisticated Arab writers on the subject, who otherwise brings to it a sensitivity rare among his compatriots, goes so far as to reject altogether the applicability of the tragic dimension, basing his rejection on the claim that tragedy is not "a Semitic idea." See Edward E. Said, "A Palestinian Voice," *Columbia Forum* (Winter 1969).

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and the frequent replacement of those structures by military regimes.

Western observers usually interpret the emergence of the military as a sign of modernization and a guarantee of rapid, if forced, progress. Within the Arab context, however, the emergence of military regimes in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, and the Yemen has not signified a breakthrough to modernization, but a reversion to the traditional, legitimate form of government accepted and revered by the Arabs and by Islam for the past fifteen hundred years. Islam, after all, is the Army of the Faithful, the Caliph the Commander of the Faithful. Within the political culture of Arab society, military power equals political legitimacy, and for this reason military leaders have had very little difficulty establishing their authority in Arab countries. That very few voices have ever been raised in the Arab world to question the place of the army in politics is easily understandable: in Arab society, it is as natural and as legitimate for the army to take over power as it is in a Latin American country, or as it was for the Praetorian Guard in the late Roman Empire to become the repository of political authority. In societies created by conquest (Rome, Latin America, and the Arab world), political power not only grows out of the barrel of a gun, it is identical with the gun.

Even in as highly mobile an Arab group as the present-day Palestinians, many of whom have been uprooted from their traditional mode of living and whose condition of exile makes them far less conservative than any other Arab group, the kinds of leadership and political integration that have emerged appeal to the traditional imagination of a people whose history is one of conquest, of continuous warfare, of military glory, and especially of subjugating the vanquished infidel. To a somewhat ignorant Westerner, Yassir Arafat may appear to be a new phenomenon; as a social type, however, he belongs in the same category as Fawzi Kaukji, Hassan Salameh, and Abd el-Kadr el-Husseini—the Palestinian military leaders who in 1948 led their fellow Arabs into tragedy and defeat in their first confrontation with Israel.

It is in this respect too that the Arab military regimes, however radical their ideology, differ in social *praxis* from the revolutionary armies of China, North Vietnam, or Cuba. For in each of these latter countries the traditional, conservative army was overthrown and destroyed, and replaced by the revolutionary people's army which became the new ruling force. In the Arab countries (with the exception of Algeria, whose history is altogether different due to the country's century-long occupation and administration by the French, who completely pulverized the traditional Arab society) it was the *traditional* army that took over political power: no people's army, no revolutionary war. In some cases, as in Egypt, the army then tried to create a social organ as an alternative integrative force, but the Arab Socialist Union of Egypt is hardly anything more than a front. In Syria, the Ba'ath party is an adjunct of the army: the different factions within the party reflect only the different formations of the Syrian army commands and the different ethnic-religious groups (Alawis, Druzes, Suni Moslems) within the army.

THE LACK of a cohesive social *praxis* in Arab nationalism is reflected in the fate of the Arab refugees. The claim, made by Israel, that the plight of the refugees from the 1948-49 war has been cynically exploited by the Arab governments is, of course, true, though it obviously also serves as a convenient alibi for the Israelis to do nothing about the refugees themselves. But there is something else at work here too, something which became evident to Israelis only after the Six-Day War, when they could visit the camps on the West Bank and in Gaza. A visitor to any of these camps might have expected to find a plethora of Arab voluntary relief organizations actively at work. Certainly a visitor from a Western society, or anyone familiar with similar situations in a Jewish context, might have realistically expected some form of philanthropy or do-goodism, some expression of bad conscience which, after all, does help to make the life of the wretched of the earth a little more bearable. Nothing of the sort. Insofar as voluntary work has been done in the camps (aside from the work of UNWRA), it has been done by various Christian, Western church-relief organizations. In a camp near Ramallah (the most sophisticated and affluent town on the West Bank), one looked in vain for evidence of local efforts to do something concrete for the refugees; the equivalents of Hadassah, ORT, or the JDC were conspicuous by their absence. Every Ramallah burgher, on the other hand, would upon questioning fervently assert his belief in the sacred right of the refugees to be reinstated in their former lands, and his willingness to provide the refugees with all the political support they needed, verbal or otherwise; when it came, however, to a feeling of solidarity, of social responsibility, of a shared fate, the response was total silence. Social relations between Ramallah—and other townships on the West Bank and in Gaza—and the camps were limited to the brutal fact that the camps supplied the town with cheap labor.

It is clearly possible in Arab society for political rhetoric about the rights of refugees to go hand in hand with their severe social exploitation without creating all the uneasy questions such a situation would create in any other society. Even among the refugees themselves, no socially radical movement directed against the socially-entrenched classes has ever emerged. The internalized norms of Arab society operate as strongly among the refugees as they do among the established classes. Thus, the question is not why Arab society has failed to absorb the

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refugees economically and socially; one can well understand that leaving the refugees in camps is a rational, if cruel, means of keeping the issue alive. The question is why Arab society has done nothing for the refugees on an interim level, and the answer is to be found not in considerations of politics or propaganda, but in the sheer absence of those societal orientations that make voluntary mutual aid in times of crisis almost an institutional necessity in, say, Jewish social life. The lack of a social dimension in Arab nationalism is as much the scourge of the refugees as it is of Arab society in general.

YET WHATEVER the social nature of Arab nationalism may be, the conflict is still a conflict between it as a movement and the Jewish national movement as embodied in the State of Israel. Indeed, a general recognition of the fact that the conflict is between two movements, rather than between states as such, may perhaps become the key to a possible solution of the Middle East problem. Ultimately, there is no conflict between Israel and Egypt, or between Israel and Syria; the conflict is between Israel and the Palestinians. It is true that this conflict has been in abeyance most of the time between 1949 and 1967, but the reason is that those parts of the British mandate of Palestine that were not incorporated into Israel in 1948 also did not emerge as an independent Arab Palestinian state; rather, they were either annexed by Jordan (as in the case of Judea and Samaria, the so-called "West Bank") or kept under Egyptian military occupation (as in the case of the Gaza Strip). But it is likewise true that scarcely anyone officially recognized Jordan's annexation of the West Bank and of East Jerusalem (most significantly, *no Arab country recognized the annexation*), and everyone who knew anything about the Middle East was well aware that the Palestinians were far from happy under the rule of King Hussein and his Bedouin army, whom they considered inferior to them in culture and learning (Hussein springs from a dynasty whose historical abode has been the Hedjaz, now in Saudi Arabia, and his grandfather had been installed in Transjordan after World War I by the British). Nevertheless, although all this was known, nobody really bothered about the Palestinians, since the uneasy stalemate between Israel and the Arab countries created the illusion that the basic problems would somehow be solved with the passage of time. Came the 1967 war, and all the old questions were ripped open again, and the Palestinian Arabs were now brought into the consciousness—and conscience—of the world.

It now seems clear that any settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict that does not deal with the problem of Palestinian self-identity will fall short of the requirements of a truly peaceful solution. The Palestinian organizations have said time and again—and their statements should be taken seriously—that even if the Arab *states* make peace with Israel, they will go on fighting. Under such circumstances, the border situation between the Arab states and Israel will remain tenuous in the extreme. The same can be said of what would happen in the case of an "imposed solution" by the Great Powers—a settlement short of peace but guaranteeing cessation of hostilities. Those who desire such a solution—their number includes some Israelis—have in mind a model drawn from the situation in 1957, when Israel was forced to retreat from Sinai under Great Power pressure and in return was given some guarantee that the border with Egypt would be kept quiet, as it really was until May 1967.

But 1970 is not 1957. The powers may impose a settlement on Israel and the Arabs (I myself tend to doubt the possibility of this, but am ready to grant it for the sake of argument), but neither the United States nor the Soviet Union can impose a settlement on the Palestinian organizations. The options open after the Sinai War of 1956 are simply not open today, since one has now to deal not only with Egypt and Jordan, but with the Palestinians as well, and the latter will not abide by any settlement to which they are not a party. For it has been precisely the Palestinians who have by their activities succeeded in frustrating what little hope there was after 1967 of reaching an accommodation between Israel and Jordan.

The trouble, of course, is that the Palestinians today are committed to the same maximalist policies that spelled their doom in 1948, when they rejected the UN partition plan and thereby jeopardized their chance to establish an Arab state in a part of Palestine. As a "war of liberation," the guerrilla effort is hopeless; it can cause a great deal of damage to Israel's image, it can kill quite a number of Israelis, but it cannot win a war, "liberate" the occupied territories, or destroy Israel. The West Bank is less than half the size of New Jersey; it contains no swamps, jungles, or mountain ridges. Anyone who thinks in terms of Algeria or South Vietnam is deluding himself; the geography of the West Bank simply cannot become the territorial base any guerrilla movement needs in order to succeed. This is why the Arab guerrilla effort has characteristically fallen back on personal and indiscriminate terrorism. But while terrorism of this kind often *accompanies* a true guerrilla war (again, Algeria and South Vietnam may serve as examples), in the Palestinian case terrorism has become a *substitute* for guerrilla war. Exploding a bomb in a supermarket or university may kill a lot of people, but it will not win a war. Throwing hand grenades at Arab refugees in front of an Israeli labor exchange may deter them from cooperating with Israeli efforts at economic rehabilitation; it will not win a war. Ultimately, this kind of terrorism is a sign of failure. Indeed, it is reminiscent of the terrorism prac-

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ticed during 1936-39 by followers of the Mufti; in each case, guerrilla warfare, having failed in its objectives, deteriorated into a dirty, indiscriminate orgy of murder, which in the end killed more fellow Arabs (suspected of collaboration or of selling land to the Jews) than Jews or British soldiers. In the 30's the ideology flowing out of the barrel of terrorist guns was fascist rather than quasi-Marxist, but the Israeli confronted with a bomb in a bus station has the uncanny feeling of *déjà vu*.

Nevertheless, in my opinion, it is the Palestinians, despite their failure to achieve their aims through military or terroristic means, to whom one may look for a way out of the present impasse. For the purposes of the ensuing discussion, I will rather mechanically divide the Palestinians into two categories: (a) those under Israeli rule in Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and in the Gaza Strip; and (b) those on the East Bank of the Jordan (the old Transjordan), in the rump of Hussein's Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Let me begin with the latter group, those under Hussein's rule, both because with regard to them Israel can do very little to affect possible developments and because it seems to me that precisely with regard to them Israel should begin to rethink some of her conventional political wisdom.

BEFORE 1967, Jordan was, next to Lebanon, the most accommodating of Israel's neighbors, and accordingly Israeli political thinking grew accustomed to the notion that Israel had a stake in the continuation of King Hussein's rule. Indeed, Israel had made it clear several times that she would have to react in the event of a radical, pro-Egyptian coup in Jordan. There is little doubt that because of this stance Israel has more than once prevented a Nasserite takeover in Jordan. In 1958, in the wake of the Iraqi *coup d'état*, Israel allowed British aircraft to overfly her territory en route to Jordan to bolster Hussein's regime against a possible revolt. And after the Six-Day War, Israeli hopes focused on Hussein as the Arab ruler most likely to be willing to negotiate with Israel; in the summer of 1967, government leaders as diverse in their political opinions as Moshe Dayan and Abba Eban adopted a policy of "waiting for the phone to ring" from Amman.

Today, it appears improbable that King Hussein, even if he were willing, would be able to move toward an accommodation with Israel. A virtual condominium now exists in Jordan, with Hussein retaining his throne only at the mercy of *Al Fatah*. For the guerrillas, who rule while the King reigns, this is an optimal solution: they have power without responsibility. In addition, the King's presence ultimately serves to provide the guerrillas with an American umbrella. That is, because of U.S. relations with Hussein, Israel is under a severe handicap in dealing with the guerrillas, who thus get Soviet arms and indirect American protection.

Out of inertia and a spirit of accommodation, Israel has continued to stake her chances on Hussein. But the truth is that Hussein is now an obstacle to peace. Were he to vanish from the scene —a prospect that is particularly painful for the U.S. to consider—a chain of events might be set in motion that could be more conducive to eventual peace than his continuing presence has proved itself to be.

The majority of the Jordanian population east of the river is Palestinian in origin; Transjordanian Bedouins are a minority. Historically speaking, Transjordan was always a part of what has been considered Palestine, and it was included in the territory given by mandate to Great Britain after World War I. However, in order to find a throne for Britain's protégé Abdullah, Winston Churchill in 1922 ruled that the provisions of the Balfour Declaration did not apply to the area east of the Jordan. Transjordan was thus turned into a semi-autonomous Emirate, but until the end of World War II the British High Commissioner for Palestine was also vested with ultimate power with regard to Transjordan.

Now, it is my view that if tomorrow the Palestinian guerrillas were to overthrow King Hussein —they have the power to do so—and proclaim the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Palestine, something more would be achieved than a mere exercise in semantics. A Palestinian Arab state, populated by more than a million Palestinians, would come into existence, albeit in only a part of what the Arabs consider the whole of Palestine. The Palestinians would thus come back into their own. I entertain no illusions that this would satisfy the maximalist Palestinian claims, and I have no doubt that the Palestinians would in all probability continue to hope for the destruction of Israel. Nevertheless, the grievance at the root of the conflict—the frustration of the Palestinians—would be greatly alleviated. Palestinian Arabs would have a state of their own, their "homelessness" would be to some degree remedied, a place would be set for them in the councils of nations with an army, a flag, and all the trappings of sovereignty. They would, in other words, regain their consciousness of existing on a political level.

Some observers, especially in Israel, consider such a development highly dangerous, since they claim that it would mean a radicalization of Jordan and the replacement of the moderate Hussein by an extremist like, say, Yassir Arafat. *But Jordan is already radicalized*, and it is difficult to imagine how the Palestinians, once in power, could be more radical than they are today. Moreover, one of the paradoxes of Arab society is that only radicals can afford to be moderate, while moderates tend to play to the radical gallery (compare the violent behavior of the moderate

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Hussein with the moderate behavior of the radical Syrians on June 5, 1967). It may well be that a new, radical Palestinian regime in Jordan would behave in reality very much like the present military regime in Syria, which has managed since the Six-Day War to combine the most radical ideological anti-Israel stance with a surprisingly moderate and pragmatic attitude in the field; despite some recent deterioration, the Israeli-Syrian ceasefire line has been much quieter than the Israeli-Egyptian or the Israeli-Jordanian frontiers.

If the guerrillas became the government in Jordan, it would be difficult for them, even if they received Soviet support, to escalate their military activity beyond the present level. For they would then have to take account of the price the population in the Jordan Valley is paying for their activities—a consideration which they now dump in Hussein's lap. It is a historical truism that an underground movement, once come into formal, political power, tends to become responsible, and respectable, in the exercise of authority. In all, I think it eminently worthwhile for Israelis, who shudder at the thought of *Al Fatah* taking over Jordan, to have second thoughts on the matter.

BUT THESE developments, to repeat, are outside Israel's sphere of direct involvement, and Israel can do very little to bring them about. Israel can, however, initiate a number of steps with regard to the other category of Palestinians—those now under her rule on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

The kind of military administration set up by Israel in these territories after the Six-Day War was a brilliant improvisation; as a temporary measure, it provided Israel with maximum security while allowing minimum interference in the life of the local population. The general idea was that the less the military administration meddled in the daily affairs of the population, the better, and the result is that today Arab municipal self-government on the West Bank and in Gaza remains intact, and Jordanian and Egyptian laws are still the law of the land. Yet, basically, this entire policy was conceived as a stopgap measure, intended to maintain law and order until negotiations between Israel and the Arab states got under way, as most Israelis were sure they would. Now, three years after the war, one must deal with the real possibility that the provisional will be transfigured into the semi-permanent. Liberal and minimalist as this sort of administration may be, furthermore, it still is a military form of government, and Israel is considered an occupying power by the local inhabitants. All the benevolent care taken by the military administration in matters of agriculture and medical and social services is, ultimately, offset by the need to protect Israel from the guerrillas, which means arrests, interrogations, and the imposition of curfews when a grenade is thrown at a tourist bus or at a group of Jewish worshipers in Hebron or at Israeli housewives in Gaza. Israel has refrained from passing death sentences on perpetrators of such acts, but the long prison terms meted out do not endear the Israelis to the local population.

In my opinion, what Israel has to do now is to make clear its readiness to discuss peace terms not only with the Arab states, but also with the representatives of the Palestinians. What I have in mind specifically is a discussion with the Palestinians now under Israeli rule concerning the possibility of establishing a Palestinian Arab state on the West Bank and in Gaza.

Such a proposal, of course, comes up against a host of difficulties: the envisioned state will need access to the sea, as well as facilities for secure communication between the West Bank and Gaza; Jerusalem will undoubtedly be a thorny problem, and Israel will have to insist on some guarantees for her security along the Jordan river. But, once negotiations were undertaken, the fundamental issue would have been breached, for the Palestinians would then be the first Arab group ever to acknowledge the legitimacy of Israel. Premier Golda Meir once said, in rejecting a proposal that Israel negotiate with the Palestinians: "Is what the Arabs need a fourteenth or fifteenth state?" The Arabs may not need such a state; the *Palestinians* do. Israel too may not need a fourteenth Arab state—but she is in dire need of the *first* Arab state to accept her existence and to be willing to enter into negotiations.

But why, it may be asked, should the Palestinians under Israeli rule wish to do what no other Arab state has ever been ready to do—accept Israel's legitimacy? Some, like Aziz Shehade, himself a refugee from Jaffa and now a lawyer in Ramallah, and perhaps the most courageous Palestinian leader on the West Bank, say openly that this may be the chance the Palestinians missed in 1948 to establish their own state. Others, like the Mayor of Hebron, Sheikh Ali al-Ja'abri, may be more cautious, believing that some arrangement will eventually be made, either directly between Israel and Jordan or diplomatically through the Powers, that will bring Jordanian rule back to the West Bank. But on various occasions Ja'abri has indicated that if this does not happen in the near future, then it will be up to the Palestinians to negotiate with Israel on their own, psychologically difficult as that may be. To all the Arab *states* Israel has very little to offer in return for negotiations; to the Palestinians it can offer independence, sovereignty, and honor.

Ja'abri and his colleagues are aware that once they entered into negotiations with Israel they would be branded as traitors by their fellow Arabs. But, as the present stalemate continues, more and more Palestinians in the areas under Israeli rule may come to realize that the choice before them, though brutal, is also simple: either do nothing and continue to be ruled by Israel, or ne-

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gotiate in order to achieve independence. Given Arab pride, and the utter unwillingness of Arab states to recognize Israel even at immense cost to their own societies, this may be a long and agonizing process; but more and more Arab intellectuals on the West Bank are beginning to think along the lines of possible negotiation, though few have as yet mustered the courage of Shehade to say in public what they are ready to concede in private.

Israel, in all events, must be prepared for such an eventuality. It would be foolhardy for Israel to come out with an actual plan for a Palestinian state or even to state publicly that she "recognizes" such vague concepts as a "Palestinian entity," as some rather naive do-gooders have suggested she do. At the outset Israel should limit herself to stating clearly and unequivocally that she considers the Palestinians as partners for future negotiations in the same way that she is ready to negotiate with any Arab government. This would give an immense push to those Palestinians who are at present toying with the idea, but who would never come out into the open unless assured in advance that Israel will not turn them down flat.

The question, of course, arises as to who are the proper representatives of the Palestinians. Roughly speaking, one should name first the indigenous leadership on the West Bank, people like Ja'abri, the Mayor of Hebron; Hamdi Canaan, the ex-Mayor of Nablus; Hikmet al-Masri of Nablus, the former Speaker of the Jordanian Parliament; and many others. I myself, however, would be ready to go further. In Israel, any suggestion that Israel negotiate with the Palestinians is immediately challenged by the question: "Suppose Yassir Arafat wishes to negotiate; are you ready to sit down and talk with him?" I would answer in the affirmative, although, to be frank, I do not think there is any chance whatsoever that Arafat, given his maximalist program, would wish to negotiate with Israel. Of course, should a serious shift occur in Arafat's political posture, and should he then indicate a willingness to negotiate, I believe strongly that Israel—taking all the necessary precautions—should respond positively; an Arafat willing to negotiate with Israel would represent a very different political animal from the present Arafat, who is committed to her destruction.

It is naturally difficult, if not downright impossible, to spell out in detail what kind of relationship one would like to see emerging between Israel and the proposed Palestinian Arab state. In a way, the proposal itself goes back to the substance, though not to the details, of the principle at the root of the UN plan of 1947: since two national movements claim a relationship to the land, the most equitable solution would be partition. Seen from this angle, the question as posed today has very little to do with the traditional claims of traditional Zionism; whatever views one may entertain about the historical claims of Zionism, the issue today is existential, not historiophilosophic: there *are* two and a half million Jews in Israel who view it as their home, as the expression of their national self-consciousness. Just as it is impossible to overlook the legitimacy of Palestinian Arab nationalism, it is impossible to deny the same right to the Israelis.

Since the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state could today become possible only if the Palestinians on the West Bank accepted the legitimacy of Israel, one might hope that the relationship between these two states, if not cordial or friendly, could still be based on something approaching minimal decency. Ultimately one would probably like to see a federation established, but that is a long-term hope; federation is based on mutual trust, a commodity conspicuously absent today but one which may be encouraged to develop through a less formal structure of cooperation between the two states. There is no doubt, for example, that part of Israel's burden in any accommodation with the Palestinians would be generous financial aid toward the rehabilitation of the refugees on the West Bank and in Gaza.

The inclusion of Gaza in the proposed Palestinian Arab state would, it is true, impose on the new state a territorial discontinuity, but I believe that preferable to the retention of Gaza by Israel. In human and political terms the Gaza Strip represents the most stubborn refugee problem of all, and Israel would lose any genuine chance of solving the problem if it tried to hold on to Gaza and its 250,000 refugees. In general, tempting as it may be for academics (myself included) to argue the fine points of an eventual settlement, it is at this stage a futile exercise. The first priority, for Israel and the Palestinians alike, is mutual recognition of the legitimacy of one another's national movement. Once mutual recognition is achieved, the territorial details, formidable as they may now appear, will lose much of their intractability.

There is, however, a more potent objection to the idea of establishing a Palestinian Arab state on the West Bank. This objection does not stem from considerations of ideology, but is based on the simple argument that so long as the Palestinians in other countries, mainly in Jordan east of the river, do not accept such a solution, it will, after all, solve nothing. The Palestinians on the West Bank and in Gaza may make their peace with Israel, but *Al Fatah*, or a section of it, will go on fighting Israel. What, then, will have been achieved? There is no doubt a very strong element of truth in this contention. But in putting forth a proposal for the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and in Gaza I have tried to be as pragmatic—and as minimalist—as possible, and have attempted to eschew more grandiose, and hence utopian, solutions. It would

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of course be ideal if Israel could make peace with *all* of the Palestinians; but if this is at the moment impossible, should she not at least try to achieve some kind of understanding with *some* of them? Nobody, after all, argues against a detente between the U.S. and the Soviet Union on the grounds that it will not solve the American dispute with China.

But to be more concrete: a situation in which about half the Palestinians will make peace with Israel is, after all, very different from a situation in which *all* of them reject Israel's legitimacy, lock, stock, and barrel. And a partial solution, in which some significant proportion of Palestinians can achieve self-determination, self-esteem, and dignity, and live peacefully with Israel, might point the way toward the acceptance of Israel by other Palestinians as well. There is no doubt that even moderate Palestinians—I have met many on the West Bank since the Six-Day War—are in a way forced into a posture of extremism by the total refusal of official Israel policy to accept their legitimate claims. It is a safe assumption that many Palestinian moderates in Jordan east of the river may similarly gravitate toward a less brutal solution than the one advocated by *Al Fatah* if they were given a chance by Israel to realize, even in a small Arab Palestine, their aspiration for self-assertion.

We come now to the question of Israeli attitudes toward a possible settlement with the Palestinians, and the first thing to be said is that those attitudes are not in the least polarized along the conventional line that separates "doves" from "hawks." The division is rather a generational one, separating the old guard, the Eastern European Zionists, from the younger generation born and educated in Israel. Generally speaking, the older generation seems to be more close-minded about the Palestinians than does the younger generation.

The reasons for this split are to be found in a complex of ideological and existential considerations. For the older generation of Israeli leaders, Zionism provided the ideological justification for immigration to the Land of Israel; hence, for them to accept the legitimacy of Palestinian nationalism may in some way require them to reflect adversely on their own: if the Palestinian Arabs have some claim, some right to this country, maybe Zionism was wrong from the start? The traditional, archetypical Zionist is a man beset with insecurity and with a tendency to over-react, a man who still has to *prove* his claim, and is therefore likely to be blind to a competing claim. For the younger generation of Israelis, these problems of legitimacy, justification, and (ultimately) apologetics, are of considerably less importance. It is their existence as a nation that counts, not its justification; their nationalism is existential rather than ideological. For them the Arabs are not a foreign element whom they found to their surprise inhabiting the Promised Land of their ancestors; so far as they are concerned, and for as long as they remember, the Arabs have been part of their ambience. Whether they like the Arabs or not, they have learned to live with them and adjust to their presence.

We can pass over the Israeli maximalists, most of whom belong to the Herut party and who are naturally opposed to negotiations with the Palestinians. If negotiations ever materialized, Herut would surely leave the government or be made to leave. That is not the problem. The ultimate decision lies with the Labor party leadership, and here the generational division is very evident. A typical example of the older generation is the Prime Minister, Golda Meir. Despite her tough-mindedness, Mrs. Meir would be an accommodating and reasonable negotiator with any of the Arab states; when it comes to the Palestinian Arabs, however, she is hard as a rock. Asked recently about the Palestinians, she answered: "Since 1948 nobody ever heard about a Palestinian entity. Where have they been?"* And at a meeting with students at the Hebrew University she brushed aside an inquiry about Palestinian Arab identity by claiming simply that the only Palestinians who ever existed were those who held British Palestinian Mandate passports, adding that "between 1921 and 1948 I personally held a Palestinian passport."† On another occasion Mrs. Meir maintained that the Palestinian Arabs *never* had any sense of identity in national terms, since before 1918 they referred to the area involved as "Southern Syria" rather than as Palestine. This highly historical, ideologically charged attitude is very much in evidence in similar statements made by veteran Israeli leaders like Zalman Aranne, the former Minister of Education, a super-dove who before the last election showed a total unwillingness to entertain any notion of possible accommodation with the Palestinians, and like Israel Galili, one of Golda Meir's closest advisors, who in a public controversy over the issue came out very strongly against any acceptance of the Palestinian Arab claim to constitute a nation.‡

As I have noted, the younger generation of Israeli leaders hold completely different attitudes. For those who do not know Israel well, it might seem curious that foremost among these younger leaders is Moshe Dayan. Whatever his image and function as Israel's Minister of Defense, Dayan is intensely sensitive to the mood of the Palestinians, a fact of which the Palestinians in the territories under Israeli rule are well aware. Dayan once surprised a student audience in Tel Aviv when he told of his meeting with the young Palestinian poetess Fadwa Toukan of Nablus. He then

* *Ha'aretz*, February 10, 1970.
† *Pi Ha'aton* (Jerusalem students' weekly), March 3, 1970.
‡ *Ma'ariv*, May 25, 1969.

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went on to recite a Hebrew translation of a very long, extremely moving, and outspokenly nationalistic poem of hers about Jerusalem called "My City, Occupied." It was, to say the least, an eerie experience for an Israeli audience to hear an Arab lament about the loss of Jerusalem, recited by the Israeli Minister of Defense. To the hushed audience, which could not but have recalled Yehuda Halevi's lamentation on the captivity of Zion, Dayan then said:

> We have to make an utmost effort to establish contacts with the million Arabs with whom and next to whom we are destined to live. We have to come and understand their background, their emotional climate, whether we like it or not. I know only too well that at this stage, at first, this will be a one-way road: even if we understand them, they will not understand us. But even so, we have to go and listen to them in the hope that one day they will listen to us.*

Less publicized, but more important, than this incident were several abortive attempts made by Dayan to establish a liaison with Palestinian leaders on the West Bank. Of all Israel's political leaders, Dayan, in his pragmatism and non-ideological brand of politics, is probably the most open-minded about a solution that would allow the Palestinians the kind of political organization least injurious to their self-esteem and national consciousness.

Though Yigal Allon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, is at present Dayan's political rival, his attitudes to the Palestinian aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict are of a similar nature. In a number of recent newspaper interviews, Allon advocated the setting up of autonomous self-governing bodies on the West Bank, as a first step toward Home Rule (itself an "interim stage").† The new Secretary General of the Israeli Labor Party, Arie Eliav (the first member of the younger group in the Labor party ever to hold this influential position) created a stir when immediately after being elected he made a strong statement in favor of the rights of the Palestinians:

> Let the Arab people know that we shall never suppress the right of the Palestinians for self-determination and that we are ready to help them establish a state in which they will find fulfillment for their national aspirations.‡

Another young member of the Israeli cabinet, Shlomo Hillel, who, as Minister of Police, shares with Dayan a great deal of responsibility for Israel's internal security, has also advocated an open-minded attitude toward the problem of the Palestinians.**

To this list one should add an extremely interesting multiple interview with three of Israel's outstanding ex-Generals, two of whom were at one time or another Chiefs of Intelligence and hence have a better view of the Arab world than almost anybody else in Israel (Yehoshafat Harkabi, Chaim Herzog, and Elad Peled).†† Each in his own way suggested in the interview that Israel try to approach the Palestinians. Of the three, Harkabi was the most skeptical about the possibilities of success, but he was ready to concede that Israel "should recognize the Palestinian entity, if only to get rid of the subject." Herzog maintained that Israel missed a golden opportunity when she failed to implement a policy of negotiating with the Palestinians immediately after the Six-Day War. He added: "I believe that we have no chance of achieving any settlement with the Arab world except through the Palestinians." Peled, one of the most sensitive and intellectually sophisticated men ever associated with the Israeli army, raised the issue to the level of principle: "During the years of the conflict, the Palestinian Arab community asserted its national self-identity. . . . In the same way that we have claimed national self-determination for ourselves, we have to recognize it also for those who live alongside us."

One could go on with numerous examples of this kind. What they have in common is the fact that (a) sentiments like these are usually expressed by Israelis of the younger generation, and (b) the statements grow more intense with every passing month. As the present stalemate is seen to lead nowhere, more and more Israelis are beginning to view the Palestinians as possible partners to a solution. One should, however, add a final name to the list—that of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abba Eban, who until recently was very strongly opposed to any contacts with the Palestinians, mainly because he believed, probably more deeply than any other Israeli, in the possibility of an accommodation with Hussein. Recently Eban appears to have realized that the Jordanian option is now closed, and he has made announcements to the effect that the conflict should be seen in terms of an Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, though he has thus far stopped short of suggesting what form the future identity of the Palestinians should take.

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* Speech at a student meeting, Tel Aviv, October 16, 1968. In his recent volume of collected speeches, Dayan devoted a whole chapter to "Our Palestinian Neighbors."

† Speech to the Foreign Press Association, reported in *Jerusalem Post*, October 14, 1969; interview with Ari Rath, *Jerusalem Post*, October 24, 1969. The idea of some kind of autonomous rule has been taken up by the small, but intellectually influential Independent Liberal party, which passed a resolution calling upon the government to proceed on these lines (*Ha'aretz*, March 15, 1970).

‡ Arie Eliav, *Ye'adim hadashim le-Israel* [New goals for Israel] (Tel Aviv, 1969), p. 11. See also his interview in *Time*, January 26, 1970.

**Dan Margalit, "Hayeshut ha-Palestinait" [The Palestinian Entity], *Ha'aretz*, March 13, 1970.

†† The interview was published in *Ha'aretz* weekly magazine, February 20, 1970; an English translation appeared in the April 1970 issue of *Midstream*.

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Though there is no doubt that the continuing war of attrition has caused a hardening of the Israeli position in general, an attitude more open-minded toward the Palestinians is becoming, on the other hand, increasingly pronounced among younger Israelis who do not suffer from the traumas of the older generation. Whenever an Israeli leader puts in an appearance at a university campus, he is sure to be asked very persistently about his views on a possible accommodation with the Palestinian Arabs on the West Bank—a situation that did not obtain two years ago. Newspaper articles, letters to the editor, symposia and panel discussions on radio and TV devote far more space and time today to this aspect of the Israeli-Arab predicament than ever before. One of Israel's leading young experts on Arab history, Shimon Shamir of Tel Aviv University, made a large impact on the Israeli public with a series of articles on the subject, as did a young Israeli general-cum-scholar, Matityahu Peled. The continuing stalemate is bound to heighten Israeli sensitivity on this subject, just as it is bound to bring more Palestinian Arabs to the realization that negotiations with Israel may be the only way to regain Arab control of the West Bank. On the other hand, those, like Golda Meir, who continue to ask "Who are the Palestinians?," seem increasingly out of touch with reality; for it is Palestinian organizations that send their members to kill and maim Israelis, and it is against members of Palestinian organizations that Israeli patrols lie in nightly ambush in the Jordan Valley. Under such conditions anyone still questioning the existence of Arabs who consider themselves Palestinian is talking ideology, not facts.

IT MAY BE that mutual recognition between the two movements for national liberation, and the establishment of a Palestine Arab state on the West Bank, are a distant prospect. But as a possible solution, perhaps the only solution, to the clash between the two national movements, it is manifestly superior to, as well as more realistic than, the vague proposal, put forward in some quarters, for a "non-denominational," "bi-national" Palestine, in which Arabs and Jews would live peacefully side by side. In such a state, one community is bound to emerge as a majority, the other as a minority. As an Israeli, I certainly would not like to live as a member of a minority Jewish community in a country with an Arab majority; neither would I like to be a member of the Jewish majority in a country that had an Arab minority of about two million people. "Bi-nationalism," noble as it may sound, overlooks the dynamism of modern nationalism and in a way fails to take seriously both the Jewish and the Arab claim for nationhood and sovereignty. Cyprus and Nigeria provide two rather poor examples of bi- or multi-nationalism in a situation of tension; even Belgium and Canada show serious internal strains precisely because of the fact that "bi-nationalism" tends to institutionalize rather than to resolve tensions, suspicions, and national traumas. Arab nationalism, it should be noted, has been particularly nasty in its treatment of ethnic or religious minorities—as the examples of the Kurds in Iraq or of the blacks in Southern Sudan suffice to demonstrate.

Over the last century the Jews and the Palestinian Arabs have emerged into national movements, each craving a home, a place in the sun, a corner of the earth it can call its own. Throwing both of them into a state which would be neither Jewish nor Arab would make it impossible for either movement to overcome mutual tension and start cooperating with the other. A "bi-national" state, moreover, would run immediately into problems such as the relations between the Jewish sector and world Jewry, immigration, and links with the Arab world; how on earth could questions like these, which are at the root of the present conflict, ever be peacefully resolved within a single body politic? Instead of giving each national movement its due, a "bi-national" state would castrate and frustrate both national movements. Advocates of such a solution even overlook the fact that their program founders on the seemingly trivial but very fundamental question of name. Following *Al Fatah* propaganda, they take it for granted that their proposed state ("democratic," and "secular") would be called Palestine. But why should two-and-a-half million Israeli Jews consent to live in a state called Palestine, any more than two million Palestinian Arabs should consent to live in a state called Israel? When it comes to national movements, it is the grossest folly to ignore questions of consciousness —of symbols, dates, historic events, heroes, and national imagery. Both the Palestinians and the Israelis have rich national cultures, and both wish to develop those cultures and maintain their specific links to groups all over the world to which they feel allied: the Israelis to world Jewry, the Palestinians to the Arab world and Islam. In this connection, the example of Lebanon, which is often cited as a paradigm, is seriously misleading. For in Lebanon, the various groups—Muslims, Christians, Druzes—all consider themselves Arabs, use Arabic as their language, and relate directly to Arab culture and Arab history; their differences lie in the religious sphere. The Israelis, however, are emphatically *not* Arabs of the Jewish religion.

The conflict between Israel and the Arabs that arose in historic Palestine can come to an end if both protagonists will accept each other's legitimacy. Israel has to accept the legitimate claim of the Palestinian Arabs to a state of their own on the West Bank, ultimately also perhaps integrating Transjordan; the Palestinians have to accept the legitimacy of Israel. It is the tragedy of the Palestinians that at present every one of their

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organizations (PLO, *Al Fatah,* PFLP, PDFLP, *et al.*) denies the legitimacy of Israel and thus helps to frustrate any possible Israeli attempt to accommodate to the facts of Palestinian Arab nationalism. On the Israeli side, the great hope is the younger generation, which bears the brunt of the battle, and which is far more open-minded about the Palestinians than its elders; were the Israeli government to give some concrete expression to the mood of younger Israelis, an important step forward will have been taken. At that point it will be the turn of the Palestinian Arabs on the West Bank to take up the challenge, and by accepting the legitimacy of Israel pave the way for taking their place in that historic land which, for better or worse, they have to share with the Israelis.

One of the leading scholars of Arab nationalism, George Antonius, ended his *The Arab Awakening* in 1938 with the warning: "The logic of facts is inexorable. It shows that no room can be made in Palestine for a second nation except by dislodging or exterminating the nation in possession." Because the Arabs have behaved according to this formula, events have tended to prove Antonius right. But his words were nothing more than a self-fulfilling prophecy, and hence he shares, with many other Arab intellectuals who think like him, some of the moral responsibility for the tragedy of the Palestinians. Israelis and Palestinians can now prove Antonius wrong. Both nations *can* coexist in the area of historic Palestine, each in its own sovereign state. But the path to coexistence leads neither through the force of arms alone nor through the somewhat impotent channels of diplomacy. Since it is a conflict between two national movements, it is a conflict also over consciousness, and as Hegel rightly pointed out, such conflicts can be solved only through mutual recognition. This is the challenge which now confronts both Israelis and Palestinians.

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Quackery in the Classroom

Samuel McCracken

TO BEGIN on a note of solemn affirmation: I consider elementary and secondary education in this country to be nightmare almost unrelieved, and were I king, all that would remain would be a few of the handsomer buildings, an occasional administrator, some of the teachers, and all of the students. Such views hardly set me apart these days, for we live in plague season. In such a time, the alchemists, geomancers, and sellers of mandrake root begin to sound as likely to heal as doctors of physic. A recent anthology of the new breed of romantic educational reformers, *Radical School Reform*, edited by Beatrice and Ronald Gross,* provides useful selections from just about every authority in that curious new school of educational theory where the bright, well-scrubbed, shiny faces on all the idealistic reformers almost make one forget the faint aroma of snake-oil about the halls.

I found myself pausing at the title: *Radical School Reform*? Why not *The Revolution in the Schools*? As it turns out, the editors have a special definition for what is educationally radical:

> Radical has many meanings, in fact. In politics, radical means revolutionary . . . in social relations, radical means libertarian . . . in a school situation, radical means unorthodox ways of promoting learning that fall outside the scope of conventional or even innovative school practice.

As opposed, no doubt, to *orthodox* ways of promoting learning that fall outside the scope, and so forth. Well, I suppose *Unorthodox School Reform* wouldn't quite have made it.

The book is divided into three parts, along lines reflecting with fair accuracy the three types of works which have characterized the movement: "Some Realities"; Something Else: Theory"; and "Something Else: Practice." Despite the tidy organization of *Radical School Reform*, it would be difficult and not very illuminating to review it conventionally, largely because a great many of the selections are collops cut from larger works, which make little or inconsistent sense without their theoretical and dialectical contexts. I shall try, accordingly, to review the movement as much as the book, an exercise which will lead me to discuss a number of the entire works from which the Grosses excerpt, and some works not excerpted at all.

IF NOT THE first of the prophets in time—Paul Goodman and Edgar Z. Friedenberg were notables when he was yet unknown—John Holt has attained an eminence and authority nearly papal, on the basis of his first two books† and a considerable spate of periodical literature, some of it recently collected in book form.‡

How Children Fail is ultimately an infuriating book, infuriating because although it contains any number of exceptionally keen insights into the learning process, observations which would entitle their author to some importance in the history of education, it ends by finally marshaling these observations about the methodology of education into an exceptionally dogmatic and imperceptive theory of its content and end. Of that unfortunate marshaling more in time. The principal methodological insight of the work, carefully documented from Holt's experience as a teacher in "good" private schools, is that children respond to the strategies of their teachers by developing their own set of eventually self-defeating counters, and that by providing the inspiration for such, the most enlightened of teachers in the best of schools eventually end up by subverting learning. A principal part of the process is the ease with which students learn to regard *Yes* answers as preferable to *No*, quite without regard to the extrinsic value either may have. Thus, when playing "Twenty Questions," the object being to determine a number between 1 and 10,000, a standard gambit is to ask "Is it between 1 and 5,000?" Children in Holt's classes invariably applaud a *Yes* here, groan at a *No*. In the closing stages of such a game, children will repeatedly ask a question already answered *Yes*, apparently for the simple pleasure of hearing affirmation. Holt rightly believes that such irrational behavior grows out of an emphasis on getting right answers as opposed to defensible ones.

He observes that his students frequently know appallingly little about arithmetic, no matter what their assumed preparation, so little that the first task of the teacher is to plumb the depths of

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* Simon & Schuster, 350 pp., $7.95.

† *How Children Fail* (1964), Pitman; *How Children Learn* (1967), Pitman.

‡ *The Underachieving School*, Pitman, 203 pp., $4.95.

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their ignorance, and to start from there: he provides several impressive anecdotes suggesting how such a technique can work to teach arithmetic to those apparently ineducable in it. Another notion, as provocative if less easily documented, is that students seek refuge in incompetence, knowing that they can sink to a level which convinces teachers they are hopeless, at best not worth bothering anymore, at worst meriting praise for a pitiful level of performance.

Any reader who follows Holt through his observations of the learning process will be impressed by his ability to get inside his students, and the astuteness with which he handles what he sees there. As I shall make clear, I think Holt's short-run influence will be deleterious, but I think there can be no doubt that if the schools can make use of those nugget-like passages in which Holt talks about how children learn, and reject the surrounding fool's gold, Holt may yet be made to expedite that learning process which, even though he confuses it with education, is after all its basis.

An example of the detritus I have mentioned is the summary chapter of *How Children Fail*, in which Holt makes the first of his assaults on the notion of curriculum, a notion which he seems to understand to mean only a body of knowledge judged all-sufficient in itself. Without for the moment arguing an alternative view, that curriculum may be seen rather as a body of knowledge perhaps useful in itself, but primarily important as a tool for developing certain habits of intellectual behavior quite apart from its intrinsic value, I want to sketch the lurid sort of argument Holt uses to discredit curriculum as he defines it.

Our information, he begins, is constantly subject to revision, and it is therefore difficult to be sure that any body of knowledge now taught will be *true* in twenty years, let alone relevant. He cites several examples from his own education:

> I studied physics at school from a fairly up-to-date text that proclaimed that the fundamental law of physics was the law of conservation of matter—matter is not created or destroyed. I had to scratch that out before I left school. . . . Not for many years after I left college did I learn that the Greeks, far from being a detached and judicious people surrounded by chaste white temples, were hot-tempered, noisy, quarrelsome, and liked to cover their temples with gold leaf and bright paint; or that most of the citizens of Imperial Rome, far from living in houses in which the rooms surrounded an atrium, or central court, lived in multi-storied apartment buildings, one of which was perhaps the largest building in the ancient world. The child who remembered everything he heard in school would live his life believing many things that were not so.

I am myself professionally incompetent to talk about conserving matter, but physicists tell me that the Law of the Conservation of Matter, no matter how badly clawed by Mr. Holt, is still around, and one of the most accepted of scientific propositions. It was last modified seriously in 1905, by something involving $E=MC^2$. If Holt was really taught the sort of nonsense he appears to have believed about the Greeks and the Romans, that is a sad commentary on the state of classical studies at Yale University in the last generation, and, at least with regard to the Greeks, upon Holt's ability to read such texts as the *Birds* or the *Apology*. In any event, the epiphanies vouchsafed Holt about the Greek psyche and Roman housing are far from representing a state of knowledge perfected after he took his B.A.: they represent improvements in his own understanding.

Note also the peculiar crudity of Holt's last sentence: what children hear in school equals what they believe all their lives (as long as they remember it); and the only way, given the imperfection of knowledge, to keep them from believing the false is to keep them from hearing anything at all. The problem with the argument is that eventually it is an argument against education. Now, if the schools were teaching the Ptolemaic cosmology as truth, and Holt could demonstrate that the Copernican cosmology were true, that would surely be compelling argument against requiring anyone to study Ptolemy. But although it would also be an argument against teaching Ptolemy at all, in the sense of teaching him as truth, it would hardly be an argument against teaching astronomy. No one should be forced to study the sort of nonsense about the Greeks to which Holt was apparently exposed. But that does not mean that no one should study the Greeks.

What Holt appears to demand of the curriculum, indeed of knowledge itself, is that it should be *perfected* before the young study it. This seems a curiously absolutist stand for one of Holt's general orientation, absolutist if not totalitarian: Holt's canon of perfection would be quite understandable to the curriculum consultants who must revise eighth-grade history texts in the Soviet Union.

Allied to Holt's view of curriculum is the claim that one piece of learning is as good as another, an assertion he supports by arguing that herpetology (which is rarely in the secondary curriculum) is as exciting to some students as chemistry (which usually is), and that science (whatever that is) may excite some more than Roman Britain. Without pointing out that herpetology is, after all, a branch of biology, which is in the curriculum, and that we live in a world threatened by the activities of scientists who were in effect allowed not to learn about Roman Britain, it can be said that these examples do not do a great deal to demonstrate the truth of the assertion that one piece of learning is as good as another, a statement, whatever its fatuity, which is beginning to be profoundly influential in contemporary educational theory. A group of my friends

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are starting an experimental college called, significantly, "The Learning Community." Their prospectus contains the remark, "We will not be concerned that certain things are being learned, but rather, that everyone in the Community is learning." The people who wrote that are cultivated and gifted scholar-teachers, and when I hear such people talk like that, I begin to wonder if education may indeed be obsolete. It ought to be patent that not all learning *is* equally desirable: the learning capacity includes at minimum the power to learn (a) truth, good habits, and sound values, as well as (b) falsehood, bad habits, and deplorable values. There is no evidence from history or behavioral science to indicate that man's capacity or disposition for learning (a) is greater than his capacity or disposition for learning (b).

Underlying Holt's argument here is a basic confusion common to most of the recent reformers, the confusion of education and learning. Historically the latter has been seen as a process by which the former may proceed. Holt and his school either fail to distinguish between the two, or, having made the distinction, prefer the part to the whole. Traditional education, warts and all, always assumed that something was needed to mobilize learning in the service of education, indeed to insure that the learning that went on was of the sort I have called (a) rather than of the sort I have called (b). One would not be excessively idealistic to suggest that education is learning of the (a) variety and that what goes on at (b) can best be called miseducation, a process no more a variety of education than National Socialism is a variety of Socialism. A principal device available to education to keep it from being miseducation is in fact a curriculum. No one in his right mind would argue that the curriculum as currently defined does much to prevent such degeneration; but to argue that the present misuse of a technique has led to nothing but failure does not lead to the conclusion that any other technique is necessarily better. "Nothing but failure" is an advised use of words: a prime article of faith for Holt and the others is that learning is simply impossible in a conventional setting. Holt himself begins *How Children Fail* by claiming that most children do fail. This belief is not unlike that dogma of the old education that no education ever took place before the birth of John Dewey, and that since his birth none has taken place outside the United States. Under Holt's assumptions, it is difficult to understand how he learned to write and we to read.

This confusion of education and learning leads to a secondary one, that of methodology and content. *How Children Fail* often achieves brilliance as an analysis of methodology; as a treatment of content it is callow and unoriginal. While nowhere does it contain a persuasive argument that the adoption of a certain methodology makes a curriculum impossible, it does argue that *any* required learning is coercion and that coercion is always painful. The problem is that the Social Contract eventually coerces us all, and Holt thinks that education should be integrated with life. A school absolutely free would be a poor learning laboratory for even the most libertarian society: "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains." It is easy to forget that the chains of which Rousseau speaks are not the infamies of the Old Regime, but rather the minimal restraint necessary for a free society.

Holt's second book, *How Children Learn*, is at once less controversial and less original than his first. "Little children learn far more easily and effectively than we have realized." Such a statement accurately paraphrases any number of sentences in the work, and also its total content: the subset is the set. It is true enough, I suppose, if we imagine a *we* sufficiently ignorant, a non-parent, perhaps. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) knew all about the precocity of children, and used her knowledge to construct an educational system with rigors I presume Mr. Holt would deplore. I doubt that many observant parents would be surprised by Mr. Holt's descriptions of infant capacity to learn, but heaven knows the educational establishment might be.

Holt's lengthy discussions of learning to talk and read appear to be innocent of any knowledge of much of the relevant linguistic theory, particularly the work of Noam Chomsky. His major conclusion, that because we all teach ourselves to talk, admittedly a difficult task, we therefore have the capacity to learn every sort of difficult task, would seem to be challenged by Chomsky's notion of an innate linguistic competence, that man is predisposed to talk. He is not necessarily predisposed to play the 'cello, ski, or develop educational theory.

Oversimplification from inadequate knowledge runs throughout Holt's work (to a greater degree than it runs throughout everyone else's). He cultivates a simple style, and does not assume a great deal of knowledge on the part of his audience. ("Going south from London on a train, I found myself in a compartment—a small, closed-in section seating eight passengers.") Whether he really knows as little about linguistics as he appears to in the sections on talking and reading, I cannot say: perhaps he simplifies for his presumed unsophisticated audience. Certainly, to talk about talking and reading in 1967 without some knowledge of Chomsky would be as quaint as to talk about motion without some knowledge of Einstein.

LIKE *How Children Fail*, its successor, *How Children Learn*, follows a hundred pages or so of sensible observation with a section of weighty conclusion, and the conclusion is familiar:

> What we need to do, and all we need to do, is bring as much of the world as we can into the school and the classroom; give the children as

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much help and guidance as they need *and ask for,* listen respectfully when they feel like talking; and then get out of the way. We can trust them to do the rest [emphasis added].

He again assaults the curriculum with the same knowledge-gets-out-of-date argument, trotting out the conservation of matter for a second appearance, sparing the Greeks and the Romans the embarrassment, and adding valence. ("I mentioned valence to a chemist the other day, and he laughed. When I asked what was so funny, he said, 'Nobody talks about valence any more; it's an outmoded concept.' " Holt's alchemical friends may be more *à la mode* than mine, several of whom assure me that while valence is not necessarily on the frontier of research, it is alive and well in one of the most widely used basic texts in physical chemistry, Coulson's *Valence.*)

What Holt grasps for—and does not reach—in these examples is some modern equivalent of one of the famous fossils of knowledge that everyone once knew and which have had to be unlearned, such as the Ptolemaic cosmology. Even had he succeeded, the search would have been pointless. Intellectual endeavor frequently proceeds by reacting against the vulnerable orthodoxies of the past: it is not at all certain that Newton would exist without Aristotle, or Einstein without Newton; Chomsky comes to his work in generative grammar from the training in structuralism which prepared him to overturn it. Although Holt may argue that the Einsteins and the Chomskys do not need an orthodoxy against which to kick, we have little evidence that this is so, and even less that lesser minds would challenge themselves without the spur of curriculum. Since Holt is fond of citing his miseducation, let me immodestly cite mine. One of my graduate schools coerced me into the study of linguistics, a subject which delighted me not. I still recall the classes as poisoned by the sort of coercive atmosphere Holt rightly detects in the required course. Yet I eventually became so interested in the discipline that it occupies a considerable amount of my intellectual life, and provides me with some of my most enjoyable teaching. My undergraduate college, on the other hand, allowed me to be a Bachelor of Arts without any exposure to mathematics, leaving me with no more than tenth-grade geometry, as dimly remembered as Holt's Hellas. My work in linguistics requires a knowledge of mathematics, however limited, in excess of what I have, and I am forced to go to my colleagues with questions they must at best regard as pitiful. In fact, it is precisely our inability to know at ten, fourteen, or twenty-three, exactly where we are headed intellectually that demonstrates the desirability of the liberal-arts curriculum, a chance to profit from the mistakes of others.

Holt's third book, *The Underachieving School,* is, despite its title, not an articulated critique of the schools, any more than the earlier books were comprehensive accounts of learning theory. The first two were largely revisions of memoranda Holt had produced as a teacher (one cannot but envy the technique of an educator who is able to sell his old memoranda) and this last is largely a reprint of pieces recently published elsewhere, some rewritten substantially, others not at all, since as the author tells us, "this collection may be useful in different ways to many people, it seemed a good idea to make it available as quickly as possible." (As many of the pieces originally appeared in such obscure and scarce journals as the *New York Review of Books,* the New York *Times Magazine, PTA Magazine,* and *Life,* it is easy to understand Holt's desire to get them to a wider audience before it became too late.)

WHILE THERE IS a lot of repetition from Holt's other books (valence comes forward again, and those chaste white temples return from exile), many of the pieces in *The Underachieving School* are substantial developments of notions earlier casually put, and some of these are provocatively and persuasively done. In "Schools Are Bad Places for Kids," the essential argument, that an enlightened school is too often run like an enlightened prison, seems to me unanswerable. Holt's perceptions of the horrors of such an environment, and of the effect on its inmates, are astutely and compellingly developed. "Not So Golden Rule Days" argues for the abolition of compulsory attendance. Here is Holt at his provocative best, arguing from the grounds of civil liberty. The compulsory-attendance law once protected children from exploitation in factories. Now that child labor is forbidden outside of schools, the state ought to justify anew its detention of a substantial portion of the population. The only justification which would convince Holt—or me—is that being in school is clearly better for the student than being out of it. For a portion, at least, of today's students, this claim cannot be made. Holt correctly assumes that there is no hope of legislative repeal of the compulsory attendance law, and suggests a challenge in the courts on what would be semi-*habeas-corpus* grounds. That all good things would flow from such an overturning is not so clear to me as it is to Holt, but his arguments deserve a wide and impartial hearing.

If Holt is compelling when arguing from grounds other than educational, e.g. civil libertarian, his other proposals of comparable originality and controversiality can be dismaying:

Taking a longer view, I cannot see why any college should not admit anyone and everyone who applied for admission. What if they get filled up? Then let them do what any theater or movie house does—hang out a sign that there is no more room, and that people will have to wait for the next performance . . . let a student judge whether or not he will be able to do the

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> work at a college. If I go to a concert hall to hear a difficult piece of music nobody gives me an exam at the door to make sure that I am going to be able to understand it. It may in fact be too difficult and I may not understand or like it and so waste my time and money. That is my risk and my misfortune. . . . The same is true when I buy a book, go to a play, or a lecture, or a museum. Let the student take the same risk.

Cutting Gordian knots is doubtless great fun, but behind such an argument lies a series of profound misunderstandings of the metaphysics and mechanics of higher education. It is a vulgar fact that if museums and concert halls do not themselves suffer from the failures of their patrons, colleges do. The personal cost to the student who fails is ample reason for a college to try to admit only those with a reasonable chance of success, which is, after all, the principal aim of an admissions policy (given a philosophy of education under which some students succeed and others fail). But there is a serious cost to the institution itself: attrition rates affect the college in important ways. In any college budget part of the income is derived from so many tuitions paid at such and such a rate. If the college expects $2,400,000 from tuition at a rate of $2,400 a year, then the equivalent of 1,000 students must pay full tuition. Let a student paying full tuition be called a full-time equivalent student (FTE). If a college admits 400 freshmen, and none drops out by the end of the year, then it has 400 FTE freshmen. If half of them drop out at the end of the first term, then it has only 300 FTE, and with an attrition rate of 50 per cent, it would be necessary to admit 600 freshmen to achieve 400 FTE. No college would willingly confront the severe problems inherent in handling so artificially large a class for the fall term. Further, if one is trying for, say, 1,200 FTE students for an entire college, it would be necessary to admit a freshman class (whatever its own attrition) disproportionately large in order to cancel the attrition from the three succeeding years. The costs of handling such inflated classes are enormous, and, in many ways, the other-than-financial costs are equally high. I labor this small lesson in the economics of higher education because it demonstrates how Holt's unwillingness to educate himself in the areas in which he pontificates can lead him into patently absurd proposals. (Holt would probably argue that one ought not to fail anyone. But the majority of college dropouts—at least in liberal-arts colleges—leave voluntarily. And if one argues that the college ought to be made so attractive to students that they will stay, whatever the cost to an educational program, well, that is an argument, but it is not the one Holt advances, which is that there is no problem to open admissions.)

But there is another horror in Holt's argument for open admissions; and his apparent ignorance of it suggests the depths of his confusion about what really goes on in college. Students are not, like Holt in the concert hall, passive consumers. Few colleges conduct their program entirely by lecture, and at one like mine, which tries to conduct most instruction in small discussion groups (a model which I suppose Holt would prefer to Behemoth State U.), there is an absolute need for students who can not only profit from the experience, but who help promote it for others. Students who sit in apathy because they aren't able to enjoy the concert cheapen the experience for all. Holt, curiously, seems to believe that students are so peripheral to the educational experience that school can go on without them, as long as they pay their tuition. This view might find some support in the graduate faculty at Behemoth State, but I am surprised to see it held by John Holt.

The failure of the student who does not learn is not his failure alone, nor are the consequences. My own view, that a great college succeeds only with great students, is unashamedly but embarrassedly elitist, and I would gratefully forswear it any time I can be convinced that an institution which tries to educate everybody can educate anybody. Holt's uninformed and simplistic argument does not convince.

I TURN with some trepidation to one of Holt's most recent publications. While it is somehow fitting for our convolute and electronic culture to review in COMMENTARY a review in the *New York Review of Books* of a book one plans to review in COMMENTARY, it is nevertheless a considerable organizational challenge. But I shall try, since Holt's review of George Dennison's *The Lives of Children** says as much about Holt as it does about Dennison.

With Holt's opening judgment of *The Lives of Children* as "by far the most perceptive, moving, and important book on education that I have ever read," I am in essential agreement, although not, as will be seen, for the same reasons. With another of Holt's judgments I am in some little disagreement:

> Our educational system, at least at its middle- and upper-class layers, likes to say and indeed believes that an important part of its task is transmitting to the young the heritage of the past, the great traditions of history and culture. The effort is an unqualified failure. The proof we see all around us. A few of the students in our schools, who get good marks and go to prestige colleges, exploit the high culture, which many of them do not really understand or love, by pursuing comfortable and well-paid careers as university Professors of English, History, and Philosophy, etc. Almost all the rest reject that culture wholly and utterly.
>
> The average Ivy League graduate is . . . estranged from the cultural tradition, certainly those parts of it that were shoved down his throat in school. . . . The entertainment high-

* *New York Review of Books*, October 9, 1969.

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> light of the class dinner at my 25th college reunion, and the nearest thing to a cultural event during the whole weekend, was a low-comedy parody of grand opera. It seemed to be just what most of my classmates expected and wanted.

If this passage is a sample of the intellectual habits engendered by an Ivy League education, then I can only share Mr. Holt's contempt for it. There are two appalling statements here: first, that you can't even *exploit* the "high culture" except by way of a prestige college (a view suggestive of the sweeping snobbery which seems to characterize Holt's understanding of higher education, an impression reinforced by the assertion that *even* Ivy League graduates are estranged from that culture), and secondly, the impudent claim that vast numbers of people whom Holt knows neither in person nor by reputation neither understand nor love that which they profess. The first claim is that of a snob, the second that of a bigoted dogmatist who has yet to show that he himself understands or loves any part of culture. (Now that I think of it, if Holt's classmates had what appears to have been his exposure to the Greeks, their estrangement is entirely understandable.) College teaching is, to be sure, now adequately paid, but the notion that the life of the mind is ever comfortable suggests that the holder has never experienced that life, and the view that the life of the mind on a college campus is *today* comfortable suggests further a surprising insensitivity to the world about us. Where can John Holt have been? The review's major failing, however, lies in its abstraction of Dennison's experience with seriously rebellious primary students into assertions about education in general. As will be seen, this is a fault of which Dennison himself is innocent.

HOLT'S LATEST word is a statement in a recent issue of *Look*, on the kind of schools he thinks we will need in the 70's. The compactness of the piece and the fact that it was intended for a mass audience combine to exaggerate two traits evident elsewhere in Holt's writing—a humble, retiring style masking a Johnsonian dogmatism:

> Abolish all compulsory testing and grading. If a student wants his teacher to test his knowledge or competence . . . fine. All other grading is destructive and inexcusable. . . . Students of any age should get academic credit, as some college students do now, for holding down a job. . . . Let people, of whatever age, go in and out of school when they see fit, using it when it seems most useful to them. Let the learner direct his own learning.

The self-effacing cast of these remarks conceals the essentially authoritarian nature of their content. Recast them, or add a prefatory statement such as, "Sir, the education of those in their nonage is best effectuated by . . ." and the disjunction will be marvellously reduced. Even though pomposity and dogma are often joined, he who eschews the first does not necessarily eschew the second. For proof of this dogma, see Holt, *passim*.

What to say in sum, then, about Holt, whose predominance in this essay accurately reflects his predominance in his movement, and his possible influence for evil or for good? He will still be read some years hence (unless some successor adapts his theories of learning without accepting his romantic excesses) because he really has a great deal to say about teaching. But he does not know a great deal about education, and his current development does not encourage the hope that he will begin to learn about it. One wishes that he had contented himself with doing what he is obviously very good at, looking at the ways children learn. Perhaps it is an inescapable artifact of a time desperately looking for easy solutions to difficult problems that a man who is good at one thing will eventually come to believe that that's all there is to the problem.

Unfortunately, his present eminence is likely to cause a good deal of trouble long before he has a place in history. I have already dealt with the consequences of his popularization of the hoary chestnut that learning equals education. But what is finally most dangerous in his doctrine, dangerous yet nonetheless popular, is his assault on the necessity of preserving and transmitting culture. Now, it is not clear to me that Holt believes that culture *ought* to be preserved and transmitted, but I am quite sure that if it is it will not be by the sort of "education" he preaches, just as sure as he is that it is not being transmitted now. (In this connection, incidentally, it might be pointed out that the fact that Holt and his audience seem to know what he's talking about suggests that the failure is not quite so unqualified as he claims.)

Notwithstanding the forests heretofore consumed in arguing the desirability of liberal education on the grounds of cultural transmission, I will not take the transmission as obviously desirable, but content myself with two arguments in its favor, the hedonistic and the pragmatic.

The first is easily dealt with: "high culture" can be fun. It apparently is not fun for Mr. Holt, who does not exploit it with one of those well-paid and soft jobs in literature, philosophy, or history; it is clearly not fun for everyone; but it is fun for some of us. And unless one wishes to argue that some of us are somehow hereditarily competent to enjoy it while some are not—are you there, Mr. Holt?—it seems that what is needed is the improvement of transmission, not its suspension. The notion that the transmission is impossible for most ordinary blokes and provisionally possible for Yale graduates smacks of cultural snobbism, educational adventurism, high-culture elitism, and heaven knows what else.

Second, without wishing to argue for the sort of vulgar relevance now called for at every hand, I would suggest that "high culture" is in fact *useful*.

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It would be a dunderheaded reader of Thucydides's *Peloponnesian War* who did not find in its analysis of the downfall of the Athenian empire chilling omen for the American. Aristotle's treatment of rhetoric is still a cogent account of the art of persuasion. There is good stuff in Dante, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Kant, and so forth, and so forth.

I will pass over as circular any argument to the effect that Thucydides is still essential to him who would understand what history is, Plato to the would-be philosopher; even if I could prove this, the benefit would accrue only to those comfortable and well-paid philosophers and historians who graduate from Ivy League colleges. But at least for those of us who desire cultivation of our cultural heritage, I cannot recommend Holt's view of education as likely to effect it. In an intellectual milieu increasingly seduced by the supermarket, or even by custom-tailored cultures (one selects from a variety of sources the culture one likes best, or, even more groovy, constructs one's own counter-culture), it is not surprising to find educational philosophy ignoring the problem of cultural transmission. While it may be tempting to imagine that information retrieval, the media, and the counter-cultures may in time give us so much culture that its preservation may seem as otiose a task as preserving the buffalo must have seemed in 1820, and while to insist on the transmission of culture as an end of education puts one in the unpleasant company of the likes of Max Rafferty (who, whatever his other faults, is no Yahoo), the necessity and desirability of that transmission ought to remain an open issue. The Middle Ages knew a good deal more about classical antiquity than is generally supposed, but it also knew a good deal less than we know, largely thanks to the activities of the Visigoths and like-minded people. The survival of some fairly important parts of classical antiquity was a pretty near thing: we know the works of Catullus because in 1453 a looter at the fall of Constantinople turned up the only manuscript of his poems; and all the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, and many of Euripides, have survived because of a single Alexandrian textbook. The New Visigoths are at the gates, and it is no time to be complacent about cultural survival. (The Visigothic impulse is hardly limited to the destruction of texts: Chaucer did not read Homer, not because Homer had disappeared from view, but because, like almost all of his contemporaries, Chaucer could not read Greek.)

Holt's latest vision comes at the end of the *Look* article, in which he sets forth an ideal of child-directed "education." Aside from its stunning unoriginality, what can we say of the idea? As I write this, the students at my college are finishing up a month-long session of do-your-own education known as *Paideia*. (A pretentious name, to be sure, but preferable to its predecessor, *Unstructured Independent Study*. A classicist friend, asked to translate *paideia* for the benefit of the naming committee, rendered it *Structured Dependent Study*.) Certainly some education goes on during the period, but a depressing number of students turn out to require instruction in sour-dough bread baking and the *I-Ching*. And this is at best harmless. I remember a freshman from last fall who complained about having to study the irrelevant Greeks. What she wanted to study was the American Indians, who lived with nature, rather than against it, an altogether more promising life-style. I assume as normal her having decided the superiority of the Indian life-style before having studied it, but I wonder whether by herself she would eventually question the difficulties inherent in living with, rather than against, the bacilli of smallpox and syphilis. As long as intellectual faddism is challenged by reactionary educational statesmanship, there is still some hope of education as synthesis. But in a situation where ecologically-oriented communes reject the straight culture as long as no one has appendicitis, and organic-food freaks cheerfully introduce into their bloodstreams such naturally-grown pollutants as LSD, one begins to understand that a little learning is at least a foolish thing. And perhaps Pope was right about the danger: consider one of the most voracious and highly-motivated self-learners of the last generation, Adolf Hitler. He read widely, and thought intensely about what he read. But being his own judge of what he wanted to learn and how well he wanted to learn it, he was, at best, "loosely educated," in the splendid phrase of Sir Winston Churchill (a figure of whose education I doubt Mr. Holt would approve). The example is extreme, but one not reassuring as to the value of self-directed education. It is hard to imagine a curriculum-guide which would have told Hitler he was doing well, at least outside the educational system he himself eventually created.

It is, I suppose, an indication of the desperation of the educational malady that a theorist of Holt's slender ability should be listened to. But, as I have remarked, it is plague season. Consider, for example, another work generously excerpted by the Grosses, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, by Neil Postman and Charles Weingarten.* This is the most jargon-ridden and pretentious of the current bibles, the most assiduous in setting forth vulgarizations of what competent teachers have always known, and dressing the result up in the sort of Choctaw currently in favor in the Regional Education Laboratories. This is not surprising, for the authors, while lambasting the educational establishment, are in fact themselves professors of education, Postman at New York University and Weingarten at Queens College. They are, it must be said, several orders of magnitude better than the authors who usually write from schools of education, but the establish-

* Delacorte, 219 pp., $5.95.

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ment against which they rebel has left its dread mark on them, especially in terms of a weakness for the glorification of the routine and for the windily romantic in terminology. (Sometimes you *can* tell a book by its cover: the dust jacket is decorated with a red apple fitted with a burning fuse, a device consonant with a general tone designed to blow the minds of faculty malcontents smoking in the boiler-room at Kremlin High School in Kremlin, Idaho.)

Thus well begun, the authors start with a discussion of the need for the "built-in, shockproof crap detector," a concept the sturdy elegance of which is doubtless explained by its derivation from Hemingway, and which appears akin to *critical sense*, or perhaps to *skepticism*. The opening chapter, "Crap Detecting," proceeds to an obligatory account of the Knowledge Explosion, then introduces us to Marshall McLuhan, described as "one of the most dangerous men around at the moment . . . because he seems to be subverting traditional assumptions." Postman and Weingarten are the only critics I know who treat McLuhan less critically than McLuhan.

Having defined education as crap-detecting, the authors proceed to develop one of the most original theses ever propounded in a program of radical education:

> The Inquiry Method of teaching and learning is an attempt to redesign the structure of the classroom. It is a new medium, and messages are different than [*sic*] those usually communicated to students.

If the method is new, they tell us, the terms used by its critics are not:

> In instances where someone wishes to dismiss the inquiry method, it is common to hear, "Oh, all you mean is the Socratic Method." That serves as terminal punctuation. No more need be said. In better circumstances, serious people search for a "real" name: the inductive method, inquiry training, the hypothetical mode of teaching, inferential learning, the deductive-inductive method, the inductive-deductive method, and so on.

It is not quite clear whether the authors regard "Socratic method" as a proper label, rightly understood, but they shortly suggest that Socrates was in fact very close to developing the all-new Inquiry Method, and suggest further a reason for the unhappy end of his promising career in the New Education: "All authorities get nervous when learning is conducted without a syllabus." This remark illumines the *Apology* in a light so intense as well-nigh to blind, and I can only retire blinking with the remark that if all the people in the world who use the term "Socratic method" were laid end to end, there would be a good deal less philosophical confusion among those left standing.

If the Inquiry Method is really anything new, then I guess I don't understand it, but let me quote the authors on the behavior characterizing the Inquiry Teacher:

> The teacher rarely tells students what he thinks they ought to know. His basic mode of discourse with students is questioning. Generally, he does not accept a single statement as an answer to a question. [Everyone knows there are two sides to every question—S.M.] He encourages student-student interaction as opposed to student-teacher interaction. And generally he avoids acting as a mediator or judge of the quality of ideas expressed. He rarely summarizes positions taken by students on the learnings that occur. His lessons develop from the responses and not from a previously determined logical structure. Generally, each of his lessons poses a problem for students. He measures his success in terms of behavioral changes in students.

Well, these are all reasonably harmless prescriptions, if administered with a reasonable dose of salt. A good teacher worries about the dangers of killing discussion by too hasty disagreement with ideas expressed; but an absolute commitment not to judge the quality of ideas presented in class is a commitment to irresponsibility. I presume the inquiry-centered doctor would not judge the somatic condition of his clients, but rather would try to get them to come to a self-diagnosis. As a matter of fact, there is almost nothing in these prescriptions to which any sound teacher would not give qualified assent. What is ludicrous about their appearance in *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* is the notion that somehow they characterize some sort of switched-on operative who becomes possible only after reading the relevant chapter in Postman and Weingarten.

FROM THESE truisms, the authors proceed to a discussion of the one issue it is my fervent hope to outlive: relevance. Speaking of doctors, as we were, they open the chapter with a witty playlet involving a group of doctors at a Blear General Hospital, including a Dr. Gillupsie, a Dr. Killdear, a Dr. Fuddy, and a Dr. Carstairs, who, no one will be surprised to find out, is the Good Guy. The first three open the scene with a good deal of discussion about gallstone removals *qua* gallstone removals, frontal lobotomies *qua* frontal lobotomies, and the like, leading into such snappy dialogue as:

> FUDDY: Frankly, I never cared much for appendectomies.
> GILLUPSIE: Appendectomies?
> FUDDY: Well, that seemed to be the trouble with the patient in 397.
> GILLUPSIE: But you stayed with the old pilonidal-cyst excision, eh?
> FUDDY: Right, chief.

Although the playlet does not carry, well as it might, Artemus Ward's annotation, *N. B. This is wrote sarkastikul*, the authors do belabor the point: "Perhaps our playlet needs no further elab-

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oration, but we want to underscore some of its points." The main point is that teachers who teach courses their students don't want are like doctors who perform operations their patients don't need. The shift from *want* to *need* or, rather, the confusion of these two, is a device absolutely essential to the contemporary ideology of relevance, even when comparatively sophisticated ideologues obfuscate the confusion further by talking about wants as *felt needs*. Implicit here is another confusion, that teaching = medicine, and hence student = patient. This confusion, heaven knows, is becoming epidemic, as education becomes more and more an essay at bootleg psychotherapy and less and less an attempt to deal with the healthy, but the educational theorists could take a leaf from the obstetricians, who are well aware that uncomplicated pregnancy and childbirth do not constitute a disease.

A good example of the unneeded operation, according to Postman and Weingarten, is grammar. Grammar, we are told, has its controversies, but

> . . . they are of such a sterile and generally pointless nature that only one who is widely removed from human concerns can derive much stimulation from them. Browning's line that grammarians are dead from the waist down captures the sense of what we are trying to say about them. (An emphatic exception to Browning's observation is Professor Noam Chomsky, who has recently distinguished himself as an invaluable "crap detector" of the language of political bureaucrats and "house intellectuals.") . . . You see, there simply aren't any children who would have any possible reason—now or for the rest of their lives—to care about how a noun is defined, or what the transformational rules are for forming the passive voice, or how many allomorphs there are of the plural morpheme.

There is enough Yahooism in that passage to last your average educational romantic through several books, but here is God's plenty. One wonders whether Professor Chomsky is excluded from the authors' Browningesque strictures simply because he serves as a kind of latter-day Maury Maverick, or whether additionally they are making some special claims about his manliness. Of his profoundly original and influential contributions to our understanding of language, there is no mention. To say that there are no children who will *ever* have *any* reason at any time in life to care how many allomorphs there are in the plural morpheme says simply that no one should ever study linguistics. Such a position is perhaps comprehensible, but not in Messrs. Postman and Weingarten, who are, a jacket blurb informs us, co-authors of *Linguistics: A Revolution in Teaching*.* I've already paid my debt to Postman and Weingarten, and don't intend to read the book, but I have read the reviews, and they confirm one's inference from the title: the authors hold that (a) there is a science called linguistics; and (b) it can effect an educational revolution. What can one say of people who publish such a work in 1966, and who in 1969 argue that linguists are not only sterile but also impotent, practitioners of a discipline in any event of no use whatever to anyone? One can express admiration of their sense of the market, that's what one can do.

To intrude for a moment in my role as jackleg linguist, I should express my view that linguistics is irrelevant to learning to write, just as hydrocarbon chemistry is irrelevant to learning to drive, and that the current emphasis on "linguistic" high-school composition programs is 99.8 percent fraud, most of it impious. The proper place of linguistics in the secondary schools is next to chemistry, physics, and biology. Unfortunately, the schools are prone to gimmicky fads, and the teaching of composition so difficult, that the snake-oil salesmen do particularly well here. To say all of which is not to share in the sort of ignorant opportunism evident in Postman and Weingarten.

Lest I seem to select an isolated example of troglodyte argument, see next our anti-linguists play at etymology:

> Advocates of "high standards" characteristically and unwittingly invoke other revealing metaphors. One of the most frequently used of these is "basic fundamentals." Indulging our propensity to inquire into the language of education, we find that the essential portion of the word "fundamental" is the word "fundament." It strikes us as poetically appropriate that "fundament" also means the buttocks, and specifically the anus. We will resist the temptation to explore the unconscious motives of "fundamentalists."

Well, I'll resist the temptation to explore the intellectual qualifications of people who argue by means of such pitiful combinations of folk etymology and weak pun, but I cannot resist the temptation to quote them once again:

> The new education . . . enters into an entirely new "business": fundamentally [*sic*], the crap-detecting and relevance business.

My ability to resist temptation is even sufficient to keep me from speculating as to the unconscious motivations of those for whom "crap-detecting" is a basic metaphor for education. People with glass fundaments. . .

Postman and Weingarten, to do them justice, do believe in the need for a curriculum, albeit a swinging one. Gracefully called a What's Worth Knowing Questions Curriculum, it consists, in one version, of such stuff:

> What do you worry about most?
> What are the causes of your worries?
> Can any of your worries be eliminated? How?
> Which of them might you deal with first? How do you decide?

* Dell (1966).

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Are there any other people with the same problems? How do you know? How do you find out?

* * *

How can you tell "good guys" from "bad guys"? How can "good" be distinguished from "evil"?

* * *

What do you think are some of man's most important ideas? Where did they come from? Why? How? Now what?
What's a "good idea"?

* * *

Which of man's ideas would we be better off forgetting?
What is "progress"?

* * *

If you wanted to stop one of the changes going on now (pick one), how would you go about it? What consequences would you have to consider?

* * *

What's worth knowing? How do you decide?

We ought clearly to distinguish two questions about these questions: whether they are worth asking (they are), and whether they provide anything which could responsibly be called a curriculum (I think not). They are, first of all, distressingly inclined toward navel-watching, which may be a pleasant enough activity, but which is no substitute for education. A little experience with that fraction of the college generation which has ceased to worry about knowing anything except itself makes me suspect that we don't need to encourage such notions by institutionalization. One can accept Pope's advice to know first oneself, without forgetting that his next generalization was *not* "the proper study of mankind is you."

Other considerations militate against accepting these questions as a curriculum. The psychotherapeutic tone of the earlier ones suggest that the answers might well be sought from answerers with some training in therapy. (If the craze for Sensitivity Training, T-Groups, and so forth continues we may well have a generation which thinks it is competent at the sort of therapy envisioned in this curriculum, but I prefer to take a more optimistic view.) It seems of dubious value for adolescents to undertake this sort of self-analysis under the quality of guidance likely to be available in most high-schools. Moreover, answering questions like "What is change? What is progress?" is the sort of endeavor likely to be very difficult for anyone without considerable grounding in the methodologies and factual content of history and philosophy. There is, of course, no reason why the young should not ask these questions. The objection is to considering that asking such questions constitutes a curriculum.

And, finally, the later questions, for all of the authors' cautions against judging ideas in the classroom, have a distinct bias. There is a curious dearth of questions like "Is change a good thing?" and "What is stability?" Postman and Weingarten seem to be reasonably committed to the proposition that any change is a good thing, and their questions, in a world which agrees with them, are not likely to get students wondering whether an occasional *status quo ante* may not also be a good thing: the United States role in Vietnam prior to the Geneva conference, for example.

MY OBJECTIONS so far have been to the way in which two theorists embody the principle of relevance. But the principle itself can also stand closer examination. *Relevant* has become such a term of praise—and its negative has been for so long a term of dispraise—that the proposition that learning ought to be relevant has become generally accepted, with the current battle fought largely on whether, say, Homer is as relevant as Cleaver. But there are at least two serious objections to imposing the test of relevance, however defined, on what is to constitute the curriculum, however defined: that the test of relevancy encourages an essentially destructive attitude toward knowledge, and that it can become the pretext for substituting emotional predispositions for serious thought.

Most thinking people would see the danger of requiring that the objects of learning be *National Socialist, Socialist, Capitalist, Christian, American, safe, clean,* or *courteous.* And the objection one could make to imposing such criteria is not that the implicit goals are necessarily evil, for who would object to *courtesy* as a goal? The trouble here is that each of these tests proscribes some large body of knowledge. The fact that the Inquisition required of Galileo that his teaching be *Christian* suggests clearly the danger here: *true,* like *pregnant,* cannot be qualified as *very,* or *slightly;* and further, it cannot be modified as *National Socialist, American,* or *relevant.* Such a statement as "All Americans desire to live in a suburb and have 2.3 children" might be said to have white middle-class truth, but that is a claim as false as the original statement. The term *All Americans* is not modified by talking about a species of truth derived from it, and the claim remains false. In the same way, *truth* cannot be properly modified by *relevant,* and for reasons other than grammatical or logical: the truth is, truth can become relevant only after it is established. The calculus, for example, was not particularly useful when Newton devised it, at least not useful beyond making more efficient certain processes also operable with geometry, and the theories of relativity had at their birth little practical application. Had Newton and Einstein been successfully limited to the pursuit of the relevant, we would all know a good deal less than we do now. We do not know, often cannot know, as we pursue truth, whether we or anyone else will have any use for it, immediately or ultimately. What is relevant here, if you will, is that our inability to pre-

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dict the relevancy of truth requires us to pursue it wherever it may be found. The life of the mind is as crippled when its objects are defined in terms of relevance as when they are defined in terms of any sort of orthodoxy. It is possible to make a case—as I have suggested earlier—that some objects of study are more relevant than may appear, but this should not obscure the fact that the very existence of a relevance test is more dangerous than any abuse which might be made of it by the unknowing.

It may be justly observed that the objections I raise here seem pertinent especially to higher education, and that since the high schools have not in the past been concerned with the pursuit of truth, one need not bother to attack conditions unfavorable to that pursuit. Well, that's just the problem with the high schools: they have concerned themselves largely with promulgating shoddy orthodoxies, and perhaps sending them on a relevancy kick will make the situation no worse. But I presume the authors are looking for ways to improve the situation. It will not matter how much truth is discovered at Behemoth State if the relevancy freaks at John Holt High suppress most of it as irrelevant.

And not all those who cry for relevance in the interest of the learner really know what they are doing. I recently came across a declaration issued by a teacher of "social studies" in a new and highly switched-on high school, wherein he tells his students that they ought to study only what is relevant, and that what is relevant is what will enable them to make more money or supply them with immediate enjoyment. They are not slaves any more, he informs them, and they are at long last free to do exactly as he tells them. That he has settled for them in advance two questions still being hotly debated outside his classroom—namely, whether there is a need for relevance, and what is relevant—does not seem to bother him. It appears that in the high schools, as elsewhere, it is possible to invoke the dictatorship of the proletariat in the service of the fascist ruling circles.

If the ideology of relevance is potentially dangerous because it provides a scheme for enforcing a new orthodoxy (which is, as Sydney Smith defined it, "my doxy; heterodoxy is another man's"), there is yet another danger. Relevant subjects are often defined as those subjects having immediate or prospective practical value, but this neo-Babbittry is in some ways less troubling than another definition—that relevant subjects are those subjects to which one can relate. Anyone who teaches, as I do, a required freshman course beginning with Homer and ending with Montaigne, spends a good deal of time debating the question of relevance with his students. And many of the bright and committed students with whom I deal, although they do their share of complaining about the irrelevancy of Montaigne on practical grounds—though they desperately wish to change their patently unsatisfactory environments, the last thing they want to do is to learn about previous attempts at the same thing—often seem to regard the intellectual experience as essentially emotional, a sort of sweaty grappling with ideas. Now, while the life of the mind is frequently an emotional one—and there are few sights more noble than that of a man driven by passionate reason—the reason comes first, the passion second, and he who wrestles with ideas only because he is emotionally attracted to them is at least temporarily disabled as an intellectual. When one believes that only those ideas which are already somehow provisionally a part of one are worthy of intellectual-emotional engagement, then the range of thought is seriously reduced. The sorts of ideas, moreover, which seem most amenable to the ecstatic embrace are often those which the intellect would, given its chance, reject, as witness the current fad for the irrational, from "serious" students who seek guidance in the *I-Ching* and the astrology manuals, to the activists who with a straight face denounce reason as a repressive device invented by the military-industrial complex. Why the *I-Ching* should be seen as relevant and Montaigne as not is beyond my comprehension, but it is not a time in general supportive of the belief that in reason lies salvation. I tend to believe that the doctrines being preached in the more turned-on high schools by the hierophants of Holt and Postman & Weingarten are not doing much to improve matters. Certainly, some of the best of my students arrive from the high schools in a new sort of semi-catatonic state, quite distinguishable from the apathy of the Eisenhower years, and seeming to result from corrupt education, rather than from the lack of education altogether. Whatever the cause, the conversion of those literally our best hope into literal believers in witchcraft (itself a relevant discipline, considering its concern with altering the environment) is a dreadful situation, and I predict that the problem will become magnified as the new wisdom makes its way outward.

Late in *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* Postman and Weingarten suggest that teachers ask themselves the question, "Why am I a teacher, anyway?" and suggest some answers:

> Some honest answers that this question has produced are as follows:
>
> I can control people.
>
> I can tyrannize people.
>
> I have captive audiences.
>
> I have my summers off.
>
> I love seventeenth century non-dramatic Elizabethan Literature [*sic*].
>
> I don't know.
>
> The pay is good, considering the amount of work I actually do.

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That is the entire list. In these questions and answers we have a paradigm of what is right and what is wrong with the educational romantics. It is clear enough (was it not always clear?) that some teachers teach for each of the obscene motivations listed here, although I for one would regard a love for literature as a decent motivation for teaching it, even if the three-years' worth of nondramatic literature which is both 17th-century and Elizabethan seems a narrow specialty, and I suspect that the workload in the public schools is such that the pay is not really all that good. The problem here, as elsewhere, is overkill. Some teachers teach for unworthy reasons, a conclusion extant at least since Plato began to belabor the Sophists. The authors take this time-honored conclusion, and by suggesting that all teachers teach for unworthy reasons (which is the only conclusion to be drawn from their apparent willingness to consider as honest only those answers confessing unworthiness), blow it up into the sort of dreadful revelation which our crisis mentality is presumed likely to take seriously. We all know about the Big Lie; what we need now is a realization of the dangers of the Big Truism.

Let us turn from so-called educational theory to educational science fiction, in the person of George Leonard. Leonard is represented in the Gross anthology by "Going to School in the Global Village," an article originally published in *Look* with Marshall McLuhan. The article is a sort of selective précis of Leonard's later *Education and Ecstasy*.*

The book itself is at once stimulating and irritating. Although one welcomes a theorist with some historical orientation, the history is the same sort of facile summary which has proved so useful to McLuhan and so fatal to truth. (It's a brilliant suggestion that the Renaissance was a result of the printing press, so long as you think that the printing press came first, which is a not unreasonable assumption if you limit yourself to looking at Northern Europe, and are willing to forget that publishers in any event preceded printers.) The work appears athrob with many ideas, which at close inspection collapse into a handful: the human capacity for learning is greater than we have imagined; education is overly devoted to something called the rational/verbal mode; civilization is a process from which we are just emerging; the education of the future must be tribal; much can be done toward this end with technology; man's brightest hope is the Esalen Institute (Geo. Leonard, vice president); Ecstasy is a Good Thing, and there ought to be more of it, especially in education.

Leonard is easily the most switched-on of the present crop of writers, and his visions are the most apocalyptic: the schools as vast computer facilities, where under the kindly tuition of patient cybernons children can learn the present curriculum by the age of six, in an educational lifestyle reminiscent of the Fillmore Auditorium, and in the sort of huggingly conflictless world yearned for at Esalen. But Leonard is not really an educational reformer. Although he would probably reject the label of visionary, on the ground that the technology he wishes to marshal in the future is already visible just over the horizon, it seems exceedingly unlikely that school boards are going to be ready for it until 2001. Leonard's disciples, unlike Holt's, can't very well set up a demonstration project in a store-front. The book is—dare I say it?—irrelevant. Leonard appears to believe that his Kennedy School will just sort of grow as the experimental psychologists and neurologists tell us more about how we learn. Nothing, alas, in the history of American education suggests any special connection between what may be known by the best and brightest and what goes on in the schools. What is notably lacking in Leonard are instructions to get us from here to there. (Although there is one good suggestion in the book: that every parent ought to go and spend one day studying with his child as the child is forced to study. I can think of no event more likely to improve the schools than for this advice to be acted upon.)

But in sum, I am still having difficulty deciding whether the book is ingenious science fiction or dystopian satire. Satire is not something one can imagine coming out of so earnest and smooth a place as the Esalen Institute, but the similarities between the Kennedy School principal directing a guided tour and Huxley's Director of Hatcheries are tempting. One cannot help wondering who is going to do the programming, whether the same machines which will make students unable to read Thucydides without tears might as admirably administer the Four Hours' Hate. Well, as Mr. Nixon demonstrates, there are those capable of unconscious self-satire. Oh, what a brave new school is this, that hath such machinery in it!

It is a relief to turn from Holt, Postman & Weingarten, and Leonard, to the work of George Dennison, whose article "The First Street School," in *Radical School Reform*, is an extract from his recent book, *The Lives of Children*.† If the first four authors suggest educational romanticism at its worst, Dennison is an example of it at its best. Moreover, what George Dennison has done is as important as what he has written. What he has done is to have been a guiding spirit of the First Street School, an institution of twenty-three students (most under ten) from the East Village and three and a half teachers. The students were for the most part children on whom the public schools had given up; during the school's brief existence most of them were put on the road to salvation; and the miracle was worked at a cost per pupil less than that of a

* Delacorte, 239 pp., $5.95.
† Random House, 308 pp., $6.95.

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public school. Dennison, then, writes with an authority not possessed by those I have been discussing: he writes from successful experience.

It is his claim that the miracle is simply attained: ". . . running a primary school—provided it be small—is an extremely simple thing." The essentials are this: a school which, by avoiding heavy capital expenditures, is able to put most of its budget into salaries, so as to achieve a student/faculty ratio of 8 to 1, and by staying small—under thirty students—is able to dispense with bureaucracy. From these master conditions flow secondary benefits: primarily, the ability to deploy teachers as students need them, thereby permitting individual attention for those unable to function in groups, and the ability to leave the design of the program in the hands of the teachers themselves. By simple, Dennison does not mean easy: "on the contrary, teachers find [work] in a free school taxing." While I am convinced that Dennison, whose authentic humility is one of the pleasantest traits in his book, may well be underestimating his personal contribution in the form of his extraordinary gifts, I find it indicative of the possibilities of such a school that by the end of its first year, the First Street School, far from having a dropout problem, was faced with the problem of a seriously disturbed student who refused to stay away. One is reminded that the capital penalty at Summerhill is suspension from its non-compulsory classes. There can be no better indication of what is wrong with the public schools than that an approach as tentatively fruitful as that of the First Street School is not being tried out on the widest possible scale.

Life at First Street was not much like life in an average elementary school: attendance was not compulsory, discipline was limited to that necessary for the protection of others from physical harm, there was great freedom of activity for the students, a good deal of time was spent exploring the city. The teachers were able to regard each student as a separate problem (one of the few irritations of the book is that it discusses fewer than half the students, without making clear whether these are a representative sample, the successes, the greatest challenges, or what), and to follow the oft-quoted injunction of Rousseau to lose time. Dennison characterizes his most troublesome students as *rebellious,* a state he would distinguish from *disturbed*; many of them had in fact been regarded as beyond hope by the public schools from which they came. To the extent that First Street was successful with these students, it was successful with just those children with whom the public schools are most conspicuously failing. Whether or not it would have succeeded with the non-rebellious may be argued, but I am inclined to believe that it would: few of the school's activities seem especially therapeutic, and for what the evidence is worth, my own eminently non-rebellious son attends a considerably posher private school whose spirit is remarkably Dennisonian (a judgment which might surprise his teachers), and in it he and his fellows thrive in ways and to degrees I would not have thought possible.

DENNISON, THEN, is an educational reformer who comes to the world with ideas tested in realistic conditions and found not wanting. We ought, as Holt has said, to listen to him very carefully. Inasmuch as Dennison and Holt are generally invoked these days as part of a trinity usually completed by A. S. Neill, the reader may wonder how a critic with whom Holt has found so little favor can find Dennison so promising. The answer is fairly simple: although Dennison may bear a surface resemblance to the other romantics, he is at heart profoundly unlike them, whether he or they know it, and it is crucial to us all to be able to tell the difference.

If one were called upon to characterize Dennison in a phrase, the one which comes to mind first is "tough-minded romantic." As his experience has been limited to primary education, he limits his prescriptions to it. In this, he is remarkably unlike Holt, who seems to see no difference in kind between the first grade in elementary school and sophomore year in college. Whether Dennison, after teaching in college, would agree with Holt is beside the point. In his conduct of the school, he frequently did things that are anathema to the movement in general: the best way to calm a hysterical child, he tells us, is often to shake him into exhaustion. If discipline of the no-chewing-gum sort was mercifully absent at First Street, behavior which endangered others was likely to lead to suspension. Although the school admitted one student who proved to be, in Dennison's judgment, disturbed, it was also able to come to the conclusion that the admission had been a mistake, and that the school was incompetent to help him.

Dennison's theorizing, to be sure, can be as dubious as that of the others I have discussed:

> . . . with two exceptions, the parents of the children at First Street were not libertarians. They *thought* that they believed in compulsion, and rewards and punishments, and formal discipline, and report cards, and homework and elaborate school facilities [emphasis added].

Now, the parents may well have been wrong in holding such beliefs, they may well have renounced them after experience with First Street, but I am at a loss to understand the concept of *thinking a belief,* if it means anything other than *believing.* Here Dennison condescends to his parents; he can also be surprisingly naive:

> It goes without saying that teachers must be competent (which does not *necessarily* mean passing courses in a teacher's college). Given this *sine qua non,* there is nothing mysterious. The present quagmire of public education is *entirely*

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> the result of unworkable centralization and the lust for control that permeates every bureaucratic institution [emphasis added].

To this one could answer that the relation of courses passed in a teacher's college to professional competence is somewhere near absolute zero, and that while it would be a happy thought that centralization and bureaucracy are the sole causes of all that is wrong with public education, there must be other causes, else the most centralized schools would be the worst, which is not necessarily so.

But in general, Dennison's theory, the product of carefully observed experience, and of a critical understanding of Tolstoy, Dewey, and A. S. Neill, is typified by the sort of caution and realism that entitle it to the label "tough-minded." An example is his account of an imitation Summerhill. Such institutions have been mushrooming lately: one can follow their progress in a curious publication called the *New Schools Exchange Newsletter*,* in which they publish self-descriptions. The *Newsletter* would be better named *The Journal of Educational Cant*: most of the accounts appear to have been plagiarized from last month's issue, and it is the rare school where education is not free, unstructured, and joyous, all at the same time. Most of the proprietors seem to view their students as a commodity ("We've got eight kids this term, and hope to get some more kids next"), and they are all just like Summerhill, except for two little differences. They do not appear to provide anything remotely like a classical education for those who want it, and none of them is run by that extraordinary genius A. S. Neill, or anything approaching a surrogate. Here is Dennison on one such school:

> I visited a school ostensibly modeled on Summerhill, but in fact (so I believe) not much like it. I noticed two teen-agers who were pathologically depressed. I learned that they were suffering severe conflicts with their parents. I was informed, too, that their parents were small-minded, narrow, repressive, status-seeking petit-bourgeois; which is to say that the suffering of the two students had been invested with a programmatic, radical meaning: their detestation of their parents appeared as a form of loyalty to the school. The two students, in short, were being tugged in opposite directions by interested adults. To make matters worse, the tugging at school was largely *sub rosa*, implicit rather than overt, and the foreground was filled by "freedom," that is, by lack of contact, lack of guidance, lack of structure, lack of everything that children experiencing such disorders require. Let me hasten to say that such lacks cannot be filled by rules and regulations. They must be filled by persons, and not just any persons, but those capable of true encounter and decently motivated for work with the young. The problem at this school was that the director regarded staff and students less as people than as events in his own protracted struggle against middle-class America. The faculty, too, consisted of True Believers, and I had never before seen such a listless, resentful bunch, or heard the words "creativity" and "spontaneity" bandied about quite so often.

It is not common for a member of a vanguard to be so clear-sighted about his presumed allies. Where Dennison clearly differs from most of his fellow practitioners is in his fine understanding that the removal of external ordering devices requires replacement by internal ones, and that occasionally the external is justified in the absence of the internal. Thus, deciding that (a) José ought to learn to read, and (b) José would never decide on his own to start learning, Dennison simply began José's lessons in reading. José learned to read.

One of Dennison's particular strengths is his ability to see how quickly an innovator in theory can become treated as a guru and then misunderstood by a horde of Beatle-like followers. It is this critical ability, I believe, which proves Dennison no Postman or Weingarten, and which is pretty good evidence that he will not follow in Holt's footsteps. It seems very unlikely that Dennison will become no more than a self-exploiter, and he may well remain, as has Paul Goodman, a romantic to whom non-romantics must listen with absolute respect.

Holt, Postman and Weingarten, Leonard, and Dennison are likely to be the most influential of the authors the Grosses anthologize, for each of them has a program, and a program of a fairly fashionable sort. I therefore feel justified to a degree in neglecting to deal with other writers represented in the work (they include Jonathan Kozol, James Herndon, Herbert Kohl, and older, well-known writers like Paul Goodman, A. S. Neill, Edgar Z. Friedenberg, and Sylvia Ashton-Warner). All in all, *Radical School Reform* is a fair sampler of a movement, and its representativeness is hardly diminished by any doubts one may have about the validity of the movement itself. I do end by worrying about the book's possible influence on education; its publicists are already pushing it as a *vade mecum* for would-be reformers, and if there is anything that an already oversimplistic movement does not need, it is to be watered down for popular consumption in a general anthology. As a matter of fact, it is too bad for the movement to be defined, and its prophets identified, at all, for it is painful to see people like Paul Goodman and George Dennison entered on the same class list with the Holts and the Postmans and Weingartens; for the genius of the former for simple solutions is balanced by a concomitant understanding of the complexities. If they begin to be read in capsule form, the distinction may begin to blur, and that would be most unfortunate.

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In Sickness and in Health

Eric J. Cassell

IN RECENT DAYS doctors have become the targets of considerable anger. The reasons given for this anger are varied, ranging from the charge that not enough people are being given proper medical care to the complaint that doctors fail to react to patients as individuals. It is safe to say that among almost all parties to this debate, process has become confused with product. Since most people would agree that the product of medical care is health, it seems at first glance obvious that the process of medical care should be primarily concerned with the eradication of disease. There is, however, more to it than that; but in order to define the process of medical care with any kind of precision, one must attempt first to cut through a fog of confusion about these matters in which facts are often inextricably bound up with personal feelings, and both facts and feelings must therefore be taken into account.

The process of care—this is the first of a number of distinctions I shall be making in this essay—involves latent as well as manifest functions on the part of both doctor and patient. The manifest function of the doctor is the cure of disease: the making well of the lungs in pneumonia, the heart in heart attacks, etc. The latent function is healing, a mysterious process that makes well the *man* who owns the lungs or heart or kidneys. This distinction implies in turn—what I believe to be the case—that there is a difference between disease in an organ of the body and the illness of the whole man. In the following pages I shall use the word "illness" to mean what the patient feels when he goes to the doctor's office, and "disease" to mean what the patient has after leaving the doctor. Disease, then, is something an organ has; illness is something a man has.

I

IN ALL cultures people go to their doctors because of how they feel—uncomfortable, unpleasant, unusual. Even when a patient goes to the doctor with pneumonia, for example, he is not going because he "has" pneumonia but because he feels sick, feverish, has a cough or perhaps chest pain; the doctor "gives" him pneumonia to explain these feelings. In our society today, when we speak of disease we generally mean a disturbance of the organs or body fluids characterized by structural alteration or biochemical change. But we have also come to behave as though where no such alteration or change occurs, there is no illness: nothing, that is, to justify a visit to the doctor. When someone in our society is ill, in other words, he tends to assume that he has a disease. Yet this assumption is, I think, culturally derived; certainly it is not true of every culture. In primitive cultures, for instance, when someone is ill—unfit, unable to do—neither he nor the person from whom he seeks help has a concept of illness or disease that resembles our own. Nevertheless, in all cultures a framework exists which can explain the illness and often supply an effective remedy—effective because whether among Indians, Irishmen, or Americans, no medical practitioner who fails to return his patients to a feeling of health can hope to last long.

The Navajo Indians, to cite a specific example, have been exposed to Western medicine for about a hundred years, and in recent years the exposure has been quite intensive. But the Navajos have chosen to retain a concept of illness which is part of their own religion and culture: the function of the Navajo medicine man is still defined as bringing in good and driving out evil. Yet the Navajo concept of illness is neither primitive nor irrational: it was perhaps best explained by a medicine man, who was also a tribal leader, in a statement before a meeting of white physicians at Fort Defiance, Arizona, in 1955: "There are some things which we medicine men know the white doctor is better able to cure than we, such as appendicitis and tuberculosis; we have given up on these. Then there are such things as snake bite, which both the medicine man and the doctor can cure, each using his own method. But there is still a third kind of illness which only the Navajo medicine man can cure—for example, a person might have lightning illness, caused by his being nearby when lightning struck. You white doctors wouldn't know that person is sick and so it wouldn't occur to you to treat that person. But, in the Navajo way of thinking, it is just as impor-

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tant to treat him as it is to treat the person in pain with appendicitis."*

Other examples abound to show that there is unfitness in one form or another in every culture, but that it is presented to healers in different ways—ways that are congenial to the culture in which it occurs. In our culture the only form of unfitness acceptable to physicians is disease, that is, the alteration of body fluids. I believe, however, that we too have disabilities that are not specifically connected to disease, but that until very recently remained hidden in symptoms of disease and were treated by doctors in their more generalized role as healers of the sick. (I am not speaking about the so-called psychosomatic illnesses, in which a physical symptom can be traced to a specific unconscious conflict.) What has happened within the last generation, and for the first time ever, is that the dream of curing disease, and hence of creating profound changes in age-old disease patterns, has become more and more a real possibility. Yet medicine's technological success has created severe strains: illness and disease have come to be separated; patients now wander about disabled but without a culturally acceptable mantle of disease with which to clothe the nakedness of their pain, and doctors tend to define their role more narrowly, seeing themselves as curers of disease rather than as healers of the sick.

To understand how these changes have come about, we must keep in mind that our way of conceiving of disease, the rational-scientific basis of medicine in which we have justifiable confidence, is also in large part bound up in our specific Western cultural circumstances. We have always had explanations for things and we have always believed those explanations to be correct. Indeed, one of man's more constant characteristics is his faith in "the facts of today," whereas, if there is one thing we should have learned from the history of science, it is that over the course of time our most cherished scientific beliefs turned out to be frail reeds.

LIKE SO much of Western culture, our system of medical explanations derives from the Greeks. Hippocrates, who was born about 460 BCE, is called the father of modern medicine primarily because he introduced direct observation as a basis for the diagnosis and therapy of disease and rejected a system of medicine that was wholly dependent on magical-religious beliefs. In his long life this acute observer described, classified, and suggested rational therapies for large numbers of diseases—many with lasting accuracy. (While we tend to remember the acuteness of his observations we tend to forget that throughout his writings Hippocrates also demonstrated a recognition of, and respect for, the unknown healing forces of nature.)

The medicine that followed Hippocrates and the Greeks came to depend less on careful observation than on authority and dogma. Although some anatomical knowledge, based upon animal dissection, was added to the body of information inherited from the Greeks, a climate of religious superstition prevailed for centuries, and little real progress was made in the conquest of disease. As late as the 18th and early 19th century infant mortality was rampant, with infection, and its foster-parent malnutrition, underlying the carnage. But infection did not stop in infancy; diseases we dismiss lightly today, the ordinary contagious diseases of childhood, were then commonly fatal. Young adults died of pneumonia, streptococcal infections, and the nonspecific diarrheal diseases. Epidemics of bubonic plague and smallpox were common (the great plague of London in 1665 killed 68,000 people); these diseases did not merely sweep through in fatal waves, they remained in constant residence, the plague-bearing flea jumping lightly over the enormous gap between rich and poor.

The rush to the cities brought on by the Industrial Revolution made matters even worse: the slums were crowded beyond belief; there were no toilets and no running water; lice and hunger and filth were everywhere; sewage ran in the streets. Modern travelers to India are shocked by similar scenes that, nevertheless, represent a distinct improvement over London or Paris in the 18th and early 19th century. The diseases with which we are more familiar today—cancer, ulcer, appendicitis—were also present, and they, too, were often fatal, especially since surgery was limited in practice by the unacceptable pain it entailed and the danger of infection. The methods of the physician, rarely effective, consisted mainly of bleeding, and the administering of purgatives and emetics. It is no wonder that in the midst of all this disease and death, mankind looked to God for surcease, for, in truth, neither doctors nor medicine were of much help.

By the middle of the 19th century, however, mankind began to be lifted out of disease.† Although no cures were as yet available, the development of preventive medicine marked the beginning of improved health for the populations of Europe and America. Vaccination was probably the first step in this process, but the great sanitary revolution was even more important. This revolution, which was begun by laymen in England in

* K. Deuschle and J. Adair, "An Interdisciplinary Approach to Public Health on the Navajo Indian Reservation: Medical and Anthropological Aspects," in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 84, pp. 887-905, 1960.

† The scientific basis, to be sure, had begun to be laid long before. In the late 1600's, Sydenham, following the tradition of Hippocrates, had stressed the importance of knowing the natural history of disease and had begun to write accurate descriptions of various kinds of illness. Others followed Sydenham, so that by the early 1800's diseases were well-catalogued—an essential step in the development of treatment and a precondition for the systematic teaching of medicine.

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the 1830's, was responsible not only for modern water supplies and sewage, for sanitary laws and departments of health, but for our entire attitude toward cleanliness and health. It is this attitude, now so deeply ingrained in our culture, which wards off disease much more effectively than legal regulations, chlorine in the water, and the like.

First propounded in the late 1800's, the germ theory of disease marked another important beginning in the history of medicine: the supplying of scientific answers to questions concerning disease causation. It had of course been known for a long time that an infectious principle existed—that is, that there was some unidentified matter which provided the means for transmitting diseases—but all sorts of odd notions were jumbled in with this concept, including moral judgments that connected the acquisition of a disease with a person's bad character or intemperance. For scientists, however, such deplorable inexactitude ended with the discovery of bacteria as a cause of disease. An exactness of formulation was born—one cause, one disease—which is only now, with our increasing awareness of the existence and significance of multiple causation, beginning to weaken its hold on medicine.

Somewhat earlier than the development of the germ theory of disease, a German pathologist named Virchow set forth an explanation of the cellular basis of disease. In essence, his theory states that there are structural changes in all diseases at the cellular level and these changes are specific for each disease. Taken together, then, the germ theory and the cellular basis of disease have determined our present definition: diseases are entities in which structural change takes place and for which unique causes can be found. For all its incredible advances, medicine in its most recent phase has added only the idea of biochemical change to this basic definition.

The true age of cure, however, may be dated from the development of the sulfonamides in the 1930's. From that time on, the growth of effective therapy has been exponential. Today, the effectiveness of the modern physician can be described in superlatives: in treatment as well as in diagnosis, technological progress has made the neophyte physician of today far superior to the experienced specialist of a generation ago. The tools are indeed magnificent, the drugs fantastically effective, the electronic technology a wonder to behold. And yet, in the midst of this hyperbole we still find it necessary to ask—what has gone wrong?

II

THE HISTORY of medicine has been dominated by three lines of inquiry that can be paraphrased in question form: *what?*, *why?*, and *what can we do about it?* Illness, however, is a special phenomenon. It has both objective and personal aspects, and thus these three questions have both objective and personal meanings. Although the search for definitions has always been essential as a basis for further inquiry, it is clear to anybody who has ever been ill that the definitions that have emerged, cast as they are in terms of structural and chemical change, form an incomplete picture of illness. Similarly, the question "Why?" asked by the person who is ill is really the question, "Why me?" and is of greater dimension than the same question when asked by the medical researcher, whose germ theory of disease offers only a partial, if vitally important, answer. And since the final step, the development of cures, is contingent upon knowing the *what* and *why* of disease, it is clear that cure will be directed only *against those objective manifestations of illness that our science has defined as disease.* Thus, curing the disease will be effective in resolving the illness to the degree that the illness is explained by the disease. In those cases where all the symptoms and disordered feelings that make up illness are explained by the disease, as in streptococcal sore throat, then the cure of the sore throat will resolve the illness. But in a case like tuberculosis, where disordered feelings, disconnection from society, and numerous other ramifications are pervasive, curing—killing the tubercule bacillus—represents only part of returning the patient to health.

The following examples may make the relationship between disease and illness clearer. Through most of our adult lives most of us have a disease called arteriosclerosis. We are, for the large majority of that time, not ill from it. Similarly, hypertension and diabetes exist through most of their natural history without associated illness. On the other hand, it is possible to have illness without disease. (While hypochondriasis may leap to mind here, it probably represents a less common example.) We do not feel well; we have symptoms. Sometimes we take these feelings to the doctor and are reassured that we have no disease; more often we are given diagnoses like low blood pressure which, although they do not represent the presence of disease, make us think that our symptoms are honorable. And often we just feel ill for a few days until the feeling passes without a visit to the doctor. What those feelings of illness are and what motivates them are subjects beyond the scope of this essay, but it can be said with assurance that the problem they represent is very real: in research on the common cold, for instance, it has been found that whereas many of the volunteers who are given infectious material develop a cold, a significant proportion of the control group who are given non-infectious salt water *also* develop a classical cold, indistinguishable from the infectious type. Finally, illness and disease can coexist; as we have aready seen, during most of the world's history and for most of the world today, that is probably the most common situation. (Even here, however, things are not so simple. The huge infant and child wastage of the

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underdeveloped countries derives largely from the diarrhea symptom complex—63 per cent of all deaths in the age group one to four in Egypt. Yet despite repeated attempts, it has been impossible to demonstrate that one bacterium or virus is responsible; the symptom complex seems rather to result from a mixture of problems of hygiene and nutrition.)

Yet even when illness and disease coexist, it is possible to demonstrate the distinction between them, as the following anecdote makes clear. An elderly man, widowed for four months, had become sloppy in his clothing and personal habits, although he continued working at his job. His appetite was poor. He caught a cold which persisted, and then a bad cough. After about two weeks he developed a fever, was found to have pneumonia, and was admitted to the hospital. Despite apparently adequate therapy and an initially good response, his fever persisted and he remained listless. He told his doctor that he didn't care what happened to him and would just as soon be dead. The doctor delivered a scathing lecture to him based on the patient's lifelong moral and religious beliefs. The next day the old man was obviously better. On the day after that, free of fever and almost free of cough, he signed himself out of the hospital; he was furious at his doctor. The case is not unique.

The rise of scientific medicine, whose methodology and philosophy have tended to deny the existence of that which cannot be measured, has contributed to blurring the distinction between illness and disease. The latter point is perhaps best understood by looking at the growth of psychiatry during this century. The contributions of Freud must be counted as a major medical advance: Freud showed us, for the first time in a systematic way, the presence and many of the operations of the unconscious mind; he made clear, in an undeniable manner, the influence of early childhood experience on subsequent behavior; he introduced a mode of therapy comparable to no previous way of making people feel better. Our world has changed because of these revelations, and we shall never go back. Yet we argue about many Freudian concepts and the illnesses described by them as though they hadn't been around for over fifty years, and we argue about them because they do not fit any concept of disease that has evolved since Hippocrates (although the influence of emotions on bodily change had been appreciated even before Hippocrates). These concepts cannot be quantified; there is no structure to be examined under a microscope, no chemical to be found altered in a blood test. Naturally, there are other reasons why doctors find it difficult to accept these ideas, but at least in part the professional objects to them because they are so "soft," so difficult to measure, and so at odds with the received philosophy of disease.

But if there appears to be a real difference between illness and disease, is there a similarly clear-cut distinction to be made between healing and curing? To begin with, it is important to realize that although one must divide these functions in order to understand them, such a division is really artificial. Rarely will cure be effected without the accompaniment of at least partial healing; similarly, at least nowadays, healing is usually accompanied by cure. For the sake of discussion, however, curing may be defined as *returning a diseased part to functional integrity, or destroying or stopping a disease process.* For bacterial diseases, that means killing the bacteria; for endocrine diseases, such as thyroid disease, it means slowing down an overactive gland or replacing the deficiency of thyroid hormone in an underactive gland. Removing a diseased gall bladder is curing, as is replacing a defective heart valve. And so on. A pill can cure.

Healing, on the other hand, is *returning the whole person to fitness, to health, to a state where he can go and do.* According to this definition, an amputee is returned to health, though he remains an amputee, when he *feels* healthy. Somebody who has had a stroke, though he may limp for the remainder of his days, may feel healthy. Conversely, even after his limp is gone he may feel forever threatened and unfit and thus be forever ill. The active process of healing includes the functions of comfort, support, understanding, motivating, drawing on the "nature" of Hippocrates, the "healing force" of Sydenham, or the "phlogiston" of the 17th-century vitalists. Healing, in other words, is a highly personal phenomenon.

The way I have stated the distinction between healing and curing may be acceptable to many, but the descriptive terms unfortunately offer little insight into the process. For example, while a pill may cure, it may also have healing powers, no matter how it is dispensed. Thus, healing is not something dependent solely upon the healer; it is, rather, a process that draws upon something within the patient. We go to the doctor to get better, and in so doing, we equate illness with disease; when told of our disease, we expect to get better when the doctor cures us. Generally speaking, the doctor sees the situation in the same way. For that reason cure is the doctor's manifest function. The other process, healing, is not on our minds; we do not think about it, and, generally speaking, neither does the doctor. But it occurs, even if it is outside our awareness—latent, in other words.

But why should it be latent? Illness is a primitive state of disordered sensations, a state which, in its helplessness, in the threat it poses to the individual's sense of omnipotence, and in its loosened connections to the world outside, is reminiscent of infancy. Indeed, there is much about illness to make us think that the sick person functions in large part on an infant's preverbal level.

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Thus, awareness of the healing function is often absent not only because of the psychological mechanisms of repression and denial, but because the sick person seems to operate more in terms of primitive body language than in words.

The regression I have been describing is further enhanced by the failure of reason. The disordered sensations of the sick person may be so unfamiliar that he cannot comprehend them in terms of prior knowledge or experience. No conceptual framework available to him can explain completely, or even satisfactorily, what is happening to him, and all his thoughts only serve further to expose him to the unknown. Inner omniscience having failed him, he constructs solutions that lead to further questions he cannot answer. His explanations become more primitive, often they involve self-blame in an attempt to keep the process rational, but ultimately they threaten to overwhelm him altogether.

WHAT DOES a healer do? In essence, he forms a safe bridge between the very different worlds of the sick and the well; he uses the omnipotence with which he is invested to restore the patient's belief in his own indestructibility, and he offers the patient a surrogate control of the world when the latter's own mechanics of control have been disrupted by disability. The healer removes illness from the realm of the unknown and places it in the realm of reason and the known. (It does not matter what system of reasoning the healer uses, so long as it is culturally congenial to the patient.) Often enough neither the healer nor the patient is aware of this interaction between them; sometimes, indeed, the sensations involved may even be repressed by the patient in order to prevent conscious recognition of his helplessness.

The fact that behavior associated with illness is basically the same in different cultures, as well as in the classical myths of mankind, suggests that the healing function is one of vital importance. Therefore, if the art of healing has been diminished by technical progress, change must occur to redress the balance. As a physician, I believe that healing should remain the province of physicians, but the recent rise of T-groups, sensitivity-training sessions, Esalen-type institutes, and the like—all of which can be seen as substitutes for the kind of healing that used to be primarily associated with the role of the physician—testify to the possibility of the need being satisfied elsewhere.

One should be aware of the great risks involved in such ventures, in which the healing function of medicine is undertaken without the knowledge and discipline that medicine brings to that function, and without medicine's sense of continuing responsibility to patients. Nevertheless, the insight that lies behind the establishment of such extra-medical practices is a valid one: technical advance has brought us to the state where healing and curing have become separated. The tools of the modern doctor have allowed him to hide behind his effectiveness in curing disease. Curing, which involves primarily intellectual skills, is a much easier task to perform than healing, which imposes a greater emotional burden and responsibility on the physician. It is only natural that he should avoid something that imposes such a cost, especially when he is unaware of what he is failing to do. For what the doctor does that is now "wrong" is something better than what he ever did before. But, in fact, the physician is not simply doing something better now, he is doing something different—now he can cure directly, whereas before he could not. I do not mean that the power to cure directly necessarily diminishes the healing function. Surgeons, who cure effectively, now as they always have, are *themselves* the modality through which cure is effected, and their role as healer is harmonious with their role as curer. This was true of physicians in general for the entire history of medicine prior to the present generation. When they made someone better, *they* made him better; they were directly involved in the cure.

But now it is the penicillin that cures pneumonia, and the physician knows it. In addition, he knows that no matter who had given the penicillin, it would have been just as effective. Whether or not the patient senses this change—I believe that increasingly he does—the modality of cure has become external to the physician; as a person, the doctor has begun to give way to something that works better than he does. It is as if a new, more effective medicine man had come to town, and the old medicine man were retreating. (The new medicine man—the efficacy of drugs—has the added advantage of a lot of favorable newspaper publicity.) When a healer believes less in himself as the agent of cure than in the things he uses, it is only natural that his effectiveness as a healer will itself become diminished.

Another factor that has contributed to upsetting the balance between illness and disease has been the technical revolution in diagnosis. The yearly check-up is meant to reveal disease before it has a chance to produce illness. On the other hand, the so-called multiphasic health-screening programs, which are semi-automated check-ups, have produced many findings usually associated with disease but whose significance—because they are found so "early"—is doubtful. A doctor often does not know whether to tell his patient about the findings, or what to tell him to do about them. Yet despite the general lack of knowledge, the multiphasic health-screening techniques, now in an experimental or at least a youthful stage, are going to be a major presence before long.

Finally, technical advance has wrought a drastic change in illness patterns. I have previously discussed in these pages how the loss of the realistic threat of premature death among the young has caused great problems. The threat is no longer

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death but life, stretching out in vast reaches and demanding to be filled with meaning and return. The infectious diseases that previously caused so many deaths in the young have virtually ceased to exist (with the proviso of course that our freedom from those diseases is only as stable as our society). But disability among the young has *not* ceased. The ranks of the disabled now include the unhappy, the misfits, the alienated, the drug-abused, the underachievers, and others who suffer the illnesses stemming from a misalignment between themselves and their society.

IT MIGHT BE argued that while disability of the kind I have just described is a sad phenomenon, it should be of no concern to the physician because, unlike disease, it cannot cause death. Consider, however, the following table, which lists the probability, in percentages, of an individual's dying in the next ten years. Only the five leading causes of death are given.

WHITE MALE, AGE 10	%
1. Motor Vehicle Accidents	.30
2. Drowning	.07
3. Accidents due to firearms	.04
4. Suicide	.04
5. Leukemia	.03
Total probability of dying within 10 years	.88

WHITE MALE, AGE 15	
1. Motor Vehicle Accidents	.60
2. Suicide	.09
3. Drowning	.07
4. Homicide	.05
5. Accidents due to firearms	.04
Total probability of death from all causes within the next 10 years	1.44

WHITE MALE, AGE 20	
1. Motor Vehicle Accidents	.58
2. Suicide	.13
3. Homicide	.06
4. Drowning	.04
5. Aircraft accidents	.04
Total probability of death from all causes within the next 10 years	1.58

WHITE MALE, AGE 25	
1. Motor Vehicle Accidents	.38
2. Suicide	.15
3. Arteriosclerotic Heart Disease	.10
4. Homicide	.06
5. Chronic Rheumatic Heart Disease	.04
Total probability of death from all causes within the next 10 years	1.62

As can be clearly seen, diseases are no longer the primary causes of death in the young. But, on the other hand, death from automobile collisions, homicide, suicide, and perhaps even drowning should not be regarded wholly as accidental in nature; it is becoming increasingly apparent that they often represent self-determined destructive acts—in other words, a form of illness or disability clearly not associated with disease defined as structured or biochemical change.

But are these things the province of physicians? Last year I recorded a series of interviews in rural Jamaica and in New York City, asking the "simple" question, "What is a doctor's job?" The following quotations are illustrative of the responses I received. The first interview is with a fifty-five-year-old New York City woman, hospitalized for investigation of the rheumatic heart disease that was disabling her.

Interviewer: "What is the doctor's job?"

Patient: "To keep me alive. Want me to go on?"

Interviewer: "Yes."

Patient: "All right. Because especially now, we don't have Gods any more really and truly. Hardly anybody believes in that. So the doctor's job is one that never existed—far beyond any of the others. There were some Gods that were all of these things, and there was Jesus. Because you had another world. But since we don't believe in it any more, the doctor is now God.

"Anyway your life consists not of confronting sudden death really—like at the end which we understand—but the threats which are all around us all the time—which we don't understand. . . .

"But all the things you appreciated in God, essentially what were they? So even if you let the blood out like the Aztecs, it was to give more life. Now the doctor is the only remaining thing to prevent you from, like, the things around you. Science does it in a limited way."

Interviewer: "Why does science do it in a limited way but the doctor doesn't?"

Patient: "Because the doctor is a personal thing, a personal confrontation."

The next interview is with a forty-year-old man in a small mountain town in Jamaica, West Indies. He is very poor, owns half an acre of land, and has nine children:

Interviewer: "What do you mean by sickness?"

Respondent: "Is a thing you feel—a pain. And another type of sickness, which is poor. Poor is a sickness. You look at your kids around you, and you gots no money, you don't know no means to get food for them . . . is one of the greatest sickness in the world.

"That makes mad, it sometime eats your brain. If you don't not good enough, you run off, you mad . . . go asylum. Sometime you have plenty men that hang, of his home problem."

IF THESE, and other disabilities of our time, are not the province of physicians, in whose province

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do they fall? The knowledge and understanding necessary to heal these illnesses and reduce these disabilities are not presently available, but the same could be said of other illnesses throughout the history of medicine. The problem now is that many physicians are reluctant to turn from the easy task, the cure of rapidly disappearing diseases, to the difficult tasks presented by modern disabilities.

III

We might pause here to examine more closely some of the current criticism of American physicians, criticism which I believe can be better understood in light of the distinctions I have been attempting to draw. Criticism of medicine has probably been around as long as the profession. In part it attests to the high nature of the calling, to the fact that when all is said and done doctors are only men confronting the mysteries of life, and the role demanded of them is simply too large for ordinary mortals. However, the current criticism is different: more intense, more specific, and possibly more justified. It can best be understood by dividing it into criticism of bulk services and of individual services.

The essence of the criticism of bulk services is that there is a large unmet need for medical services in the United States; that the services provided are very, very costly; and that the distribution of services is uneven, so that the poor who have the greatest need get the least aid. The attack, which is manifestly correct as stated, comes not only from laymen but from physicians as well, generally members of the academic community, medical administrators, or the relatively new group of physicians engaged in so-called social medicine. This last group has been in the forefront of the fight for prepaid medical plans such as HIP in New York or Kaiser-Permanente on the West Coast, as well as similar attempts to increase the efficiency, decrease the cost, and spread further the available medical services. The social-medicine concept, now adhered to by most critics of bulk services, emerged relatively early in the century in an attempt to extend "private" medical services, not charity, to the less advantaged. The original demand was that medical care be made a basic right of the individual and hence the responsibility of society. Now we pretty much accept it as that: the "new" criticism has to do with the failure of the medical profession to meet its "accepted" responsibility. I put quotation marks around the word accepted because doctors as a whole may not agree that medical care (their services) is everyone's basic inalienable right. That is to say, they would probably concede, if the distinction were presented to them, that curing—the banishment of disease—might well be such a right, but that healing is a contractual arrangement that puts personal demands upon the doctor, demands that cannot easily be made the basic right of another. In any case an argument is difficult to conclude constructively when one side—the critic—assumes the existence of responsibility and the other side does not—especially when neither side is arguing about the same responsibility. Thus the real question is not whether the right to health maintenance exists—it would be hard to deny the right to freedom from disease—but, rather, how we can discharge that responsibility without destroying the latent function of medical care and thus leaving other, equally important, needs unmet. (One of the striking facts about this group of critics, including the physicians among them, is that most have never practiced medicine and hence they view the interchange between doctor and patient as primarily related to disease. Practicing physicians as a rule know very well that it is not so simple as that.)

The essence of the criticism of individual services—the second category—is that physicians have become impersonal and "don't care anymore." This kind of criticism is also on the rise, and has been since the Second World War. During this period the profession has been increasingly concerned about its "image." (Conveniently, physicians have an organization to do their worrying for them—the American Medical Association. All things to all people, the AMA is much too complex a phenomenon to be dealt with here. However, I would, as a physician, be in a bad way without it. It has helped elevate me and my colleagues to our present technical eminence. It draws on itself slings and arrows meant for individual doctors. And if things seem to be going too well, it always seems capable of making some outrageous political goof to stir up the pot again. In short, it has done more to improve physicians, medical schools, and hospitals, worried more about the doctor's image and done more to damage that image than any other institution. It should be remembered that the AMA is an organization of practicing physicians. Some of its paradoxes are the paradoxes of the practice of medicine itself.)

Apparently, doctors have good reason to be concerned about their image. "Unconcerned"; don't care"; "not committed"; "not dedicated"; "cold"; "don't take time"; "don't listen"—these, to say the least, are not the qualities one would associate with the ideal doctor. Criticism of this kind is essentially not concerned with that aspect of medical care which I have defined as curing—most people, on an individual basis, are happy enough with their physician's ability to cure—but rather with the more latent activity of healing. Hence the lack of specificity in the complaints; since, as I have noted, the healing function itself often occurs without awareness or language, it is not easy for a patient to articulate precisely the meaning to him of its absence.

There are, then, two different criticisms of med-

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icine now being voiced. The first complains of the high cost and insufficient spread of medical care, while the second complains of the insufficient warmth and attention of individual physicians' services. Both criticisms seem valid, although each is concerned with a different aspect of the process of medical care.

WHAT IS being done to solve the problems of medical care? At the moment, not much, although one can say with some assurance that change is coming. National health insurance, a basic necessity, will probably be a reality within a few years. Yet if the structure of that insurance is based upon a false understanding of the *process* of medical care, then the insurance will fail to do the job assigned it. Medicaid must stand as a classic example of insurance so designed as to perpetuate indigency, promote dishonesty, and even perpetuate illness. Medicare, on the other hand, has been good medical insurance. But it is becoming increasingly expensive, as it had to do in order to promote better medical care—which means time and service, costly items.

It seems impossible to discuss this whole problem without confronting the extremely touchy subject of money and medical fees. Although physicians are usually paid for their services, our culture insists that they act differently about money from other members of society (except the clergy). They are not meant to care about it; their relationship to money is supposed to be oblique, almost incidental. I myself frankly do not know how important direct monetary payment is as compensation for a physician's services. It is obvious that during the healing process a patient is so exposed, so vulnerable, that it helps if he can maintain some method of control over the actions of his doctor, but for some patients this is a greater personal need than it is for others. In any case, the perceived value of goods or services provided throughout our society is linked to their cost, and it would be difficult to conceive of the link not being extended to physicians' services as well. Physicians are *expected* to do well financially: it is important to our conception of their high status that they succeed monetarily. On the other hand, when they appear to be doing *too* well, they become suspect. Mainly they should be regarded as being motivated by the desire to do good, or, in other words, by their calling—a word that carries connotations of a divine or inward conviction appropriate to the function of the healer. There is nothing divine or mysterious about the desire to make money, and the money-oriented doctor is hence tainted by suspicion of fraud.

Many doctors, especially when they are young, are themselves conflicted about this problem. Some have difficulty asking for payment or charging sufficiently. In the continuing battle between academic and practicing physicians, the academicians have pointed to the higher income of the practitioner as evidence of the latter's moral failure. It is an effective argument because it finds resonance within the practitioners' own inner doubts. But in this battle too, as in so many others, neither side is arguing the real issue—indeed, generally neither is aware of the real issue. Most insurance programs and medical-care programs are unfortunately designed by men who have never practiced medicine, or who have left the practice of medicine after a short time, or a long time ago. They may feel themselves free of the taint of profit motive, and feel that they are driven primarily by a wish to do good for the recipients of the program and to protect those recipients from the greed of the practicing physician. It is frequently less costly, however, in emotional terms, to do good for the masses than to do good for individuals, and the actual motives of these men may be more complex than they care to admit.

I do not mean to deny, however, that the high income of a physician may have a corrosive influence on his work, especially if he derives from it no other reward sufficient to make up for the hard work, minimal leisure, and constant fatigue that are the hallmarks of the practice of medicine. Such a physician often loses respect for his calling, and when he does so money can become inordinately important to him.

In the past, the inner conflict experienced by the physician between the pure demands of his calling and the taint of materialism was partially resolved by the rendering of free services. Many, if not most, physicians took care of patients who were unable to pay. They charged nothing, or charged just enough to allow the patient to feel he was not receiving charity. Before the days of Medicare, many aged patients who were unable to pay were privately treated for little or no payment. Insurance, medical plans, Medicare, and Medicaid have changed all that. Because of the change, many are getting care that never before received it, and there are more who still must be reached. But the benefit is not without its moral price. Free services, freely rendered, may be one way for a physician to reduce that price. Free services cannot be demanded, for then they would be a form of servitude, but when they are given by choice they can have an ennobling effect both on the individual and on the profession he represents.

The problem of fees and reward in medicine is immensely complex. There are so many sides to it, and the issue has become so highly charged, both publicly and personally, that objective discussion has become virtually impossible. (I am sure, for example, that this section aroused real feeling in most readers.) Nonetheless, it is of central importance in planning for the coming changes in the social structure of medical care, and we all stand to suffer from a continuation of the present doctrinaire positions about medicine and money.

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Literary Revolutionism

Renee Winegarten

"YOUR LITERARY men, and your politicians, and . . . the whole clan of the enlightened among us, . . . have no respect for the wisdom of others," grumbled Edmund Burke in 1790, "but they pay it off by a very full measure of confidence in their own"; and he added, "duration is no object to those who think little or nothing has been done before their time, and who place all their hopes in discovery." Today, it is not only the literary avant-garde that is attracted to the idea of permanent revolution in both the artistic and the political field. There is scarcely a self-respecting left-wing writer who does not flaunt his revolutionary sentiments. Yet if the modern revolutionary tradition may be said to extend from the French Revolution of 1789, it is now nearly two hundred years old, so that commitment to artistic and political revolution is hardly new, but rather the shape of modern conformism. Perhaps it would not be too paradoxical to suggest that the abandonment of a revolutionary aim in the arts and politics might be the truly original and revolutionary position today. What concerns us here, however, is the widespread acceptance of revolution as "a good thing," the emotional basis of this allegiance, and the strain of *hubris* to which it so often leads.

One of the most singular characteristics of contemporary radical politico-literary discussion is the use of an extreme vocabulary. So accustomed has the eye become to such confusingly contradictory expressions of apparent approval as "the demeaning yet also creative gifts of terror" (George Steiner on Lukács) or "an overturned, humane world" (David Caute, the English novelist and historian, on Fanon), that it scarcely registers them. In what sense can terror bear gifts that are creative? And why should an overturned world be presumed to be ideally humane rather than a shambles? If words are deeds and may kill, as the experience of our era has led us to believe, then closer attention ought to be paid to this bewildering and sometimes blood-curdling vocabulary, and the pose it so complacently proclaims, as though our world were not already surfeited with horrors.

RENEE WINEGARTEN, a writer and critic who lives in England, reviewed John Gross's *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* in our February number.

The speech for the defense of this extreme line of thought has become a familiar one: it fails to distinguish between violence and the inescapable element of force and coercion present in all forms of government (revolutionary ones included), between outright tyranny and the imperfect society, since it postulates the overthrow of all existing societies that do not measure up to the ideal.

> The essential point is that violence and disorder are institutions as well as acts. . . . The old institutions, now dead, take on their real quality as systematic violence and disorder; in that quality, the source of the revolutionary action is seen. . . .
>
> . . . [revolution] remains necessary in all societies in which there are, for example, subordinate racial groups, landless landworkers, hired hands, the unemployed, and suppressed or discriminate minorities of any kind. Revolution remains necessary, in these circumstances, not only because some men desire it, but because there can be no acceptable human order while the full humanity of any class of men is in practice denied.

These observations are not the work of some young hothead: they are drawn from *Modern Tragedy* by Raymond Williams, a man of middle age and one of the most respected English literary critics. Perhaps the matter-of-fact yet obfuscating style hides the startling implication of what is being said. For what precisely does "full humanity" mean, and when shall it be known to have arrived on earth? So long as it is in doubt, revolution must be permanent; and, if Williams is to be followed, an endless succession of upheavals may be anticipated. Moreover, he is not alluding solely to societies where the oppressed have no means of redress and where revolution might appear inevitable, but to all societies, since all are imperfect to greater or lesser degree, and will doubtless remain so.

The trouble is that the writer's stance of extremism has to be ever more extreme in order to produce any effect at all. What kind of revolution (to say nothing of what kind of new order) he may have in mind is not always clear, and evidently different authors mean different things. Almost invariably, however, these things are not peaceful. Whatever the final aim, Marxist, neo-

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Marxist, whether conceived as tragedy or fulfillment, with reluctance, with satisfaction, such writers will have blood. The imagination's appetite grows by what it feeds on.

WHY DOES the idea of revolution continue to fascinate writers so? Much has been written on the subject of writers and Communism, not least Jürgen Rühle's wide-ranging *Literature and Revolution*, first published in German in 1960 and now translated into English.* Yet to confine oneself solely to Communists and those who have made noisy exits from the temple of the god that failed, would be to ignore the continuing role of pre-Marxist utopianism and of anarchism, especially among younger adherents of the Left. Moreover, comparatively little has been made of the obsession with revolution less as a means to an end than as a value in itself, cleansing, regenerative, cathartic, salvationist:

> *. . . revolution*
> *Alone can save the earth from hell's*
> *pollution.*

as Byron expressed it in *Don Juan*.

One possible reason for the strength of the appeal of revolution is that, by nature, a good many modern writers tend to be anarchists in the general, individualistic, apolitical sense rather than in the strictly political meaning of the term (though political anarchism has attracted many writers and artists). By temperament they are opposed to established authority. Some of those who joined the Communist ranks or who sympathized with Communism between the wars began from a basically anarchist, nihilist, or surrealist position—the truly surrealist act being to fire haphazardly into the street. Authors of this sort sometimes confuse their frustrated yearning for inner spiritual change with the desire to change the world. A writer of anarchist temper may be inclined to seek eventually the coherence of dialectic and ideology, the tidiness of extreme solutions, as a refuge from inner chaos. Sometimes, the same temperamental anarchism and restlessness which lead him to repose in the extreme solution, lead him out of it.

Whatever the cause, from being regarded as a disaster or at best as an unavoidable evil, like some spontaneous eruption of nature, revolution has come to be seen by many as a consummation devoutly to be wished. Today, the word evidently still carries an aura of romantic glamor and a guarantee of dramatic interest. Innumerable authors whose books have nothing to do with politics or history, contrive to include the word in their title. To succeed in placing it twice, as did the theorist of guerrilla warfare, Régis Debray, in his *Révolution dans la révolution?*, was the acme of ingenuity. In its common debased use, "revolution" simply means "change" and is employed to add factitious excitement. Of course, revolution can relate to changes of opinion as well as of government, but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, owing possibly to the trivialization of language, a good many who favor the word when contemplating the overthrow of societies either lack the imagination to perceive the consequences or else view these consequences with complacency or glee. Few, least of all those with pretensions to Marxist or neo-Marxist science, seem to be aware of their essential romanticism.

Even the arch-romantic Russian anarchist, Mikhail Bakunin, while passionately advocating revolution, nonetheless issued a clear warning:

> Revolutions are not child's play, nor are they academic debates in which only vanities are hurt in furious clashes, nor literary jousts wherein only ink is spilled profusely. Revolution means war, and that implies the destruction of men and things. Of course it is a pity that humanity has not yet invented a more peaceful means of progress, but until now every step forward in history has been achieved only after it has been baptized in blood.

The note of regret can be heard in these words; and Bakunin certainly differed from a number of his predecessors and successors in proposing magnanimity toward opponents in the hour of victory. But the note of complacency toward baptism in blood is apparent too when he declares:

> . . . there can be no revolution without a sweeping and passionate destruction, a salutary and fruitful destruction, since by means of such destruction new worlds are born and come into existence.

The belief that destruction itself can be creative and fruitful may derive in part from pagan sacrifice, where the consecrated victim's blood, seeping into the soil, renders it fertile. Without ritual sacrifice of blood, the seed would not germinate and there would be no seasonal rebirth. This notion reappears in modern guise and possibly underlies the feeling that blood sacrifice is somehow necessary for the proposed ideal to come to fruition. Apologists of World War I could see it as a holocaust for the sake of a world free from war. A novelist and revolutionary like Victor Serge (who moved from anarchism to Communism) regarded the October Revolution as "a tremendous sacrifice that was required for the future's sake." In his memoirs he could write of the "necessary cataclysms," the "necessary" terror, as Auden once wrote of the "necessary murder." Spontaneous terror could be accepted as necessary where terror fostered for Machiavellian reasons could not.

But to return to Bakunin, and to a description of his magnetic oratory:

> I no longer remember what Bakunin said. . . . His speech had neither logical sequence nor

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richness in ideas, but consisted of thrilling phrases and rousing appeals. It was something elemental and incandescent—a raging storm with lightning flashes and thunderclaps, and a roaring as of lions. The man was a born speaker made for the revolution. The revolution was his natural being.

And, it was said, if Bakunin had invited his hearers to cut each other's throats they would cheerfully have done so. That there should be something hypnotic and even pleasurably thrilling about a man who speaks with the wildness of the raging elements is essentially Byronic. And indeed this account of Bakunin's manner carries an echo of the Byronic reveling in the storm in the mountains in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*:

The sky is changed!—and such a change! O night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue;
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

* * *

And this is in the night:—Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight—
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black,—and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

Byron found the storm and darkness beautiful in their strength, but he was not content merely to look and admire; he longed to share in the savagery, the danger, and the exaltation. Where earlier poets might have expressed dread at so grandiose a manifestation of nature, Byron's imagination delighted in the simile of the earthquake which he treated as a subject of rejoicing instead of as a disaster. And this pleasure is associated, in later stanzas, with a yearning to express the inexpressible and with repressed inner violence.

For the romantics, revolution as a dramatic spectacle of electrifying storm and strife, of tempestuous oceans of human tears, of mighty earthquakes, could arouse a thrill of mingled horror and pleasurable excitement. Flaubert, in ironic vein, described how his flaccid hero, Frédéric Moreau, intoxicated with the enthusiasm of the crowd, "Voluptuously . . . sniffed the stormy air. . . ." during the Revolution of 1848. Voluptuously indeed! This kind of perverse thrill has endured. To share in something so grandiose is to acquire a vicarious grandeur. One's directionless passions and sensations would find a magnificent direction. Through one's contribution to so formidable an explosion the world would at last have to recognize that one existed, even if one were to be destroyed in the process. The shattered world itself would be playing one's funeral music.

The storm has a dual nature: on the one hand, it may well destroy what lies in its path, but on the other, it clears the air. (In this duality it resembles a conflagration which consumes and purifies.) It is thus associated with the clean sweep, so ardently desired. Man destroys so as to be able to start completely afresh, all mistakes forgotten, all botches erased. This aspiration lies very close to the perennial longing for a new life, for spiritual rebirth. Not only did the Hebrew prophets envisage redemption after terrible punishments and disasters, but the Book of Revelation, drawing heavily on the prophets and especially on Isaiah, tells of a final struggle, after which a new heaven and a new earth would come into being. But before all things are made new, strange allegorical figures of blood and death would be on the rampage; Satan and all who bear the mark of the beast would be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone to suffer eternal torments.

The kind of imagination which actually thrives on disaster and renewal on a cosmic scale has persisted into the modern world, though a spiritual vision has been translated into a secular one. Camus wrote, with feeling, of the "somber joy" of those who bring forth apocalypses in a garret. Sartre pointed out the fun of tearing everything to pieces for the benefit of humanity. The grandeur of the destruction is fundamental. A small upheaval with modest casualties would not serve at all. And in these weirdly pleasurable nightmares, the vision of the dreadful hells which must be traversed before redemption may be attained, remains clearer in detail and far more powerful than that of the heaven which gleams far-off as the ultimate goal.

WRITERS APPEAR to worry little today (though poets and novelists have rarely worried overmuch) about the precise nature of the society that will arise after the existing one has been destroyed. And it is assumed, with very little foundation, that the new must of necessity be preferable to the old, simply because it will be different. "It is necessary to overthrow that which is, in order to be able to establish that which should be. . . ," said Bakunin, aiming at the destruction of all states. His opponent, Marx, whose own affinity with romantic tendencies has been under close scrutiny in recent years, would have none of Bakunin's destructiveness, and thought it absurd to destroy an edifice without knowing how to rebuild it. Curiously, present-day neo-romantics, who regard orthodox

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Communists as hidebound party hacks always finding excuses for not getting on with the job of revolution, have reverted to a view closer to that of Bakunin.

What strikes home at once is the neo-romantics' complete lack of prudence and temperance, formerly esteemed as essential virtues in those who would rule, or their advisers:

> If circumspection and caution are a part of wisdom, when we work only upon inanimate matter, surely they become a part of duty too, when the subject of our demolition and construction is not brick and timber, but sentient beings, by the sudden alteration of whose state, condition, and habits, multitudes may be rendered miserable. . . . The true lawgiver ought to have a heart full of sensibility. He ought to love and respect his kind, and to fear himself.

Thus wrote Edmund Burke, who was by no means opposed to gradual reform, for he said, "There is something else than the mere alternative of absolute destruction, or unreformed existence."

"*Réforme non, révolution oui,*" cried Daniel Cohn-Bendit at the Sorbonne in May 1968. He was surely giving expression less to a considered thought than to an emotional bent, and revealing a neo-romantic outlook where truth to feeling still reigns supreme. Simone de Beauvoir, discussing the political leanings shared by herself and Sartre around 1929, remarked on their temperamental opposition to reform: "Society could only change globally, at one go, through a violent convulsion." In the cataclysm they awaited, and went on awaiting, change must be sudden, violent, and complete. There is something oddly reminiscent of the Christian resurrection of the dead in the longing for change "at one go" on the part of these unbelievers. The trumpet shall sound, and, as St. Paul has it, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye . . . we shall be changed." To favor reform would clearly spoil the sensational effect of the anticipated catastrophe. Besides, reforms are slow and do not always fulfill all hopes. Régis Debray, author of stories as well as revolutionary theorist, moves further: for him revolution itself is the principal value, and therefore treachery and reform go together.

UNDERLYING THIS attitude (one probably owing little to the disputes on "revisionism" which split the Marxist camp), is the deep attraction that violent action holds for the modern intellectual, whether he is on the Left or the Right. At this point such political distinctions become virtually meaningless in view of the nihilism of the aesthete, as Raymond Aron calls it. "I have lived nihilism, contradiction, violence, and the vertigo of destruction," said Camus, not only well versed in Nietzsche but an admirer of later equivocal literary Nietzscheans. And that is doubtless why in *The Fall* he makes his enigmatic protagonist Jean-Baptiste Clamence uncover the secret urge to sadistic domination underlying the public display of humanitarianism. In a bitterly ironic and self-torturing confession, this pseudo-prophet named after John the Baptist holds the mirror up to each member of his audience—"*Hypocrite lecteur,—mon semblable,—mon frère!*"—when he observes that every intellectual dreams of reigning over society by violence alone.

What does the writer *do*, after all? He sits quietly alone in his study, dreaming and struggling with words. Meanwhile, outside his window, the destiny of the world is being decided without him. He yearns to be a Byronic sharer in that "fierce and far delight," "a portion of the tempest." Impatiently he considers how long it will take for his words to influence events, if they ever do. A writer who actually prefers political to literary struggle is Jorge Semprun, a Spanish-born novelist writing in French. Semprun, who wrote the script for *La Guerre est finie,* remains a self-avowed Communist although he was expelled from the clandestine Spanish Communist party in 1962. (Semprun not only worked underground in Spain, but served in the French Resistance and was imprisoned in Buchenwald during the war.) Nothing, he feels, can equal the joy of political action which transforms reality even if only temporarily and in a limited way. Society is not changed by cultural means, in his view, but present society must be changed, although he admits no model replacement for it is handy. He too professes belief not in reform, but in the need for revolutionary violence. The word "violence," he feels, only too often conjures up stereotyped images: consequently, in highly-developed Western society, revolutionary violence should be reinvented in an imaginative way, and should be carried to the point of the paralysis of power. The conditions for revolution are never ripe, and so the natural course of history has to be forced. Semprun gives no reasons in support of these Cuban-style recommendations, whose merit is taken for granted as if they were beyond dispute.

True, his ambitious and ingenious novel, *La Deuxième mort de Ramón Mercader* does not convey quite the same impression as his expressed opinions. It is an ironic semi-Proustian meditation on the author's life, on memory, art, and literature, as well as on the labyrinth of false identities, lies, and betrayal as a figure for both life and revolution; and especially on the tragedy of Stalinism which transformed loyal militants (like Trotsky's assassin) into murderers. The assassin of Trotsky has a later homonym, a doomed aristocratic Russian-Jewish intellectual. Semprun's expressed aims, then, are to a certain extent contradicted by the disillusion conveyed by his book, a disillusion about the course of the Russian revolution that accords more nearly with literature written by ex-Communists. Still, in

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spite of dismay at the betrayal of the revolution by narrow-minded Soviet bureaucrats, for whom he reveals nothing but aristocratic contempt, the struggle to make the true revolution has to be continued: and it is shown as being continued by the exceptional remnant of old and young alike. That the true and perfect world revolution is still somehow possible remains, after all, the dream of the Left.

Clearly, however, in order to envisage revolutionary violence on the lines proposed by Semprun, or to contemplate destruction on a grandiose scale with complacency or joy, it is necessary to feel unrelenting hatred for existing bourgeois society that is taking so long to die. Criticism leveled at this from all directions throughout the 19th century and beyond, and common to Left and Right, is partly a legacy of romanticism which saw the remarkable individual at odds with a hostile, uncomprehending, soul-destroying society. The insights of so many great figures who exposed the hypocrisy of a society that preached morality while permitting industrial slavery and worse, have become the clichés of our day.

As long ago as 1937, George Orwell, much to the annoyance of his side, spoke of "the grand old Socialist sport of denouncing the bourgeoisie," remarking on the ease with which any socialist writer could lash himself into frenzies of rage against the class from which he sprang. More recently, Sartre, like Orwell immensely sensitive to smell, spoke of "the stench of the rotting bourgeois carcass"; and for him the bourgeois are just not human. They do serve some purpose, though, since they can be blamed for everything that is wrong with modern life and the modern world. It is quite literally hatred that Sartre (following his late friend Nizan) vows to the bourgeoisie, a hatred that, he avers, "will only end with myself." This savage hatred in Sartre is a form of visceral self-hatred. Like all Manicheans of the Left, he too requires a battle between the forces of good and evil. The evil personified by members of the bourgeoisie who assume a diabolic role (for, like Satan, they are "the enemy of mankind"), is countered by the good embodied in the proletariat, later replaced by the exploited peasantry of the Third World, who fulfill a redemptive function. In order to achieve full humanity for the downtrodden, the bourgeoisie has to be depicted as less than human, incapable of regeneration. This is a long way from Bakunin's professed magnanimity. It seems wayward that so much hatred has to be indulged in order to inaugurate the reign of social justice and brotherly love.

A BETTER WORLD that is to be founded on the dehumanization or death of others must be suspect. It is hard to see where its superiority to the world we know would lie. But on the killing of one or some in order to "save" the many, both Charlotte Corday and her victim Marat were agreed. "And then we are killing to build a world in which no one will ever kill," says Kaliayev, the Russian terrorist, in Camus's play, *Les Justes*. Here is not only the grand illusion of the militant Left, but its equivocal balance between compassion and lack of compassion, between idealism and ruthlessness.

This equivocal balance is inherent in revolutionary mythology itself. For the concept of revolution contains a romantic mythology of its own, not only in its destructive negative elements but in its positive aspects. These vary somewhat down the years as death-to-the-bourgeoisie—or to-the-technological-consumer-society—replaces death-to-the-tyrant; and as the nature of the underdog to be liberated changes from "The People" to the workers or the wretched of the earth. But the underlying pattern of the conception remains the same: at once death-dealing and life-enhancing. Thus in 1936 George Orwell was exalted by the egalitarian revolutionary atmosphere in Barcelona, before the terrible Communist suppression of the anarchists, while at the same time he deeply admired an Italian volunteer whose face was that of "a man who would commit murder and throw away his life for a friend." Some years later, Orwell chose this man (whom he had met only for an instant) with his "fierce . . . innocent face," as a symbol of the crystal spirit that could not be shattered. A convinced and self-denying anti-fascist, Orwell thought most left-wing intellectuals soft, and he betrays at times a secret rapport with the tough self-disciplinary ideal proclaimed by fascism—or at least, with what he felt were its good points.

In spite of the disillusion resulting from his experience of Communist methods in Spain, Orwell was still speaking years afterward (in the appendix on the principles of Newspeak in *1984*) about how the words "Communist International" conjure up a picture of human brotherhood, red flags, and barricades. In short, the term evoked the ardor that is embodied in Delacroix's once controversial painting known as "Liberty Guiding the People" on the barricades of July 1830, where the eye does not linger on the corpses in the foreground but glides up to the artist himself, gun in hand, and the working-class youth united across age and class by the spirit of revolutionary liberty. The cult of revolutionary clubs and barricades, with its particular rhetoric, surviving disillusion and actuality, was preserved in Paris in May 1968, although everyone knew perfectly well that, in an age of bulldozers and tanks, obstacles of paving stones and overturned vehicles were no longer anything but symbols.

In the same way, the revolutionary hero is not dead either. The fascination that the tragic life story of Trotsky and his family has exerted upon novelists and dramatists gives some indication of the enduring power of the appeal of the perse-

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cuted ruthless revolutionary. Yet the up-to-date version of the revolutionary hero sometimes approximates more to the late 19th-century anarchist or terrorist than to the old Bolshevik. The day was not so far off (wrote Pierre Trotignon, a lecturer in philosophy at the Sorbonne, some two years before *les événements*), when "in the dazzling sunlight of bombs," free men would try to overturn "our Babylon" (the consumer society). For these exterminating angels, harbingers of "ineluctable justice," the great uprising of the oppressed was to be "our Sinai," "the manifestation of the rediscovered law." The philosophy of tomorrow that Trotignon envisaged for himself and his friends would be allied to an active policy of terrorism, though he fully expected Western society's salvation to arise not from their actions but from Maoist China. His wild and whirling words reveal a yearning for the absolute and a desire for salvation that belong to a different field of discourse entirely.

This armchair terrorist went on to describe, with all the pathos at his command, the hard life that he and his fellows would lead: solitaries among the hostile crowd (he might say with the Byronic hero, "I have not loved the world, nor the world me"), suffering mockery today and persecution tomorrow (like the man of sorrows in Isaiah). Here is the model for the secular redeemer, whose agonies he was savoring in imagination. This model brings to mind the doomed figure of the revolutionary as seen in *The Revolutionary Catechism*, a manuscript ascribed to the sinister Nechayev and to Bakunin:

> The revolutionist is a man under a vow. He ought to have no personal interests . . . no sentiments. . . . He ought to occupy himself entirely with one exclusive interest, with one thought and one passion: the Revolution. . . . He has only one aim, one science: destruction. . . . For him everything is moral that favors the triumph of the Revolution. Everything is immoral and criminal that hinders it. . . . Between him and society there is war to the death. . . .

A French admirer regarded Che Guevara as a man not to be distracted by thoughts of his children from the revolution to which he had dedicated his life. "While the revolutionary remains the hero of our times, no other revolutionary hero will supplant Che," writes English novelist Andrew Sinclair, who speaks of him in terms of mystery, beauty, and potency, and who (after some hedging) goes so far as to identify him with the Christian savior. Because Guevara fought for the poor and chose to be sacrificed in his prime, he "gives a mystical feeling that he died for *us*, for all humanity. Clearly, he killed other men. Clearly, he hated his enemies. . . . Clearly, he advocated and used tactics that were sometimes dubious or inhuman." But clearly also these unpalatable facts do not detract in Sinclair's mixed-up mind from Che's role as secular redeemer.

The ability to overlook cruelty and ruthlessness (or rather to admire them in one's secret heart) links up with both Orwell and Camus. Camus, who intended his book *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* as a criticism of revolutionary romanticism, went on idealizing the Russian terrorist who was ready to give up his own life in exchange for the life he took. This facet of Camus and Orwell (and it might be added, a number of their contemporaries and successors) needs to be emphasized simply because they are still frequently admired as exemplars. Both honestly strove to hearken to conscience despite the romantic sympathy which they could not quite overcome for a particular aspect of revolutionary ruthlessness.

For some, then, the underground life of the active revolutionary remains richly heroic, uniting as it does self-sacrificing idealism with merciless singlemindedness, so distinct from the artist's unceasing doubts and sense of the complexities and ambiguities of life. The lonely self-abnegation of a stern but martyred elite of *guerrilleros* seeking all or nothing, victory or death, recalls (in everything except declared purpose) the heroic ideal of the warrior-monk or soldier-saint bent on self-realization and so popular in pre-war fascist-minded circles. Thus neo-romantic revolutionary heroism runs parallel with the neo-romantic heroism of fascism (since both derive from the same romantic source), while, unlike that of fascism, it appeals to a humanitarian sense of injustice. So Sartre (with many others) could maintain with Merleau-Ponty that, whatever its crimes, Communism remained superior to fascism because of its vision of the whole man, of a classless society, that is to say, in effect, because of the quality of its avowed aim, ideal or illusion, whether it fell short of these or not. For those who accept this ideal, its spirit cannot be besmirched (any more than can the spirit of religion) by the shortcomings of believers. The answer in each case lies in a return to the pristine ideal that has been betrayed.

IF ROMANTICISM is "spilt religion," in T. E. Hulme's phrase, so is revolutionary Leftism, which transfers the ideal of perfection from the divine to the human sphere where all experience is imperfect, all joy transitory. While some felt that revolution meant the restoration of true Christianity—this tendency can be found in Silone, or in Gide when he declared (in 1933) that what led him to Communism was not Marx but the Gospel—others believed that revolution meant a deliberate attempt to destroy Christianity, a Satanic or Promethean enterprise to substitute the religion of man for that of God. Those who opposed tyranny on earth opposed "the Tyranny of Heav'n" with

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Milton's Satan, regarding man's relation to God as that of slave to master. In our own day, Sartre could speak of Marxism's aim as "to prepare for Man and his reign," or could declare elsewhere that the goal of politics is the "advent" of man.

The perennial dream was to acquire not only political freedom but freedom from guilt, suffering, and evil. Once he is free from awe and worship, man becomes sole master over himself, above all "free from guilt and pain." In Shelley's egalitarian vision of the golden age in *Prometheus Unbound,* man is restored to innocence in a world liberated from suffering and evil. The golden age of innocence was either situated in the past or projected into the future: as the schoolroom tag has it, "*jam* yesterday, *jam* tomorrow, but never *jam* today." In the modern revolutionary tradition, the Judeo-Christian messianic vision of universal brotherhood and peace becomes drained of its overt spiritual content. In secular form, the aim will be achieved once victory over the diabolical tyrant (whatever changing form he assumes) is attained; while in religious form it can only be achieved through a change of heart and through the renunciation of evil on the part of each individual. The claims or social needs replace the claims of the inner life.

The revolutionary vision denies the flaw in the universe and in man, and this aspect was noted at once by those who doubted the possibility of the complete triumph of liberty and humanity.

> For this purpose, we think several things necessary which are impossible. It is a consummation which cannot happen till the nature of things is changed . . . till the love of power and of change shall no longer goad man on to restless action, till passion and will, hope and fear, love and hatred, and the objects proper to excite them, that is, alternate good and evil, shall no longer sway the bosoms and the businesses of men.

Thus wrote Hazlitt in *The Round Table* (1817). Those who believe that, with changed conditions, man's nature itself will be changed, must always remain distinguished from those who think that man's inconstant nature is the only constant, and that while it is proper to work to amend abuses and to right wrongs, it is improbable that one will amend "the whole world's wicked existence," as Carlyle puts it, or eliminate the failure and suffering that are part of life itself.

So much might scarcely need saying: yet, at least from the French Revolution onward, the pretension existed not merely to change the state of received opinion and the laws, but to change the world and to change man himself. Marx's much quoted dictum—"The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world differently, the point is, to *change* it"—has come to be applied not merely to the world and its economic and social arrangements, but to life itself. Thus Raymond Williams regards as a pseudo-category

> the acceptance, as fact, of an ultimate, essential condition of man: a nature which underlies, and precedes, his actual manifestation in particular circumstances. It is not that we may not speculate on this, but that if we accept it we are accepting something which no man can ever experience as a fact.

Nevertheless, each man experiences the shocks that flesh is heir to, just as he also experiences the presence of death as the limit, if not the form, of the human condition. Another astounding instance of the current radical tendency to deny the human condition can be found in Simone de Beauvoir's latest book, *La Vieillesse,* where she writes:

> Old age proclaims the failure of our entire civilization. It is man as a whole who must be remade, all the connections between men which must be recreated. . . . In the ideal society I have just evoked, one can fancy that old age would not so to speak exist.

For her, better social services are not the answer; what she proposes is a radical challenge to the whole system that will change life itself. The sad fact remains that the system can be challenged as radically as one pleases, senility and a lonely death will not be erased thereby. In this sense, the human condition remains unalterable, regardless of man's spiritual presumption and lack of measure.

IN THIS CONTEXT, what are we to make of the unceasing use of religious metaphors, whether subconscious or intentional, by self-proclaimed non-religious left-wing writers, who do not so easily cast off the legacy of centuries of Judeo-Christian culture? A number of these have already been mentioned, for instance, the frequent allusions to salvation, "our Sinai," "the rediscovered law," the "advent" of man. Sartre, who remarked on the religious element in the development of both Nizan and Merleau-Ponty, spoke of his own "conversion" to Marxism: he believed, he knew, his eyes were opened, in a slight rearrangement of the words and tense used by Corneille's Pauline, after she had witnessed the martyrdom of her Christian husband Polyeucte, and had been baptized in his blood. Was the choice of this allusion simply an echo of Sartre's well-known admiration for Corneille, or was it profoundly ironical and self-mocking? Both, no doubt. In any event, the effect is startling. It may be that allusions of this kind merely represent the empty survival of terminology, rather as pagan mythology continued to flourish in literature long after Great Pan was dead. But there seems something deeper here, the token of a genuine frustration and a genuine quest, where the seeker only too often ends not in Abraham's

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bosom but in Big Brother's. While ostensibly treating of politics, the seeker really appears to be treating of religion, and reveals the close connection between religion and politics in the heart of the modern intellectual.

It is here that the greatest temptation lies, in the area left arid by the decay of religion, in the thirst for the waters of faith of some kind, in the quest for a sustaining absolute without which men find it difficult to live. Abhorring the void, the mind substitutes an invented absolute—history, the future, mankind—for the one it can no longer accept, while continuing to employ the language that belongs to the discarded faith. Loneliness encourages the idealization of a haven of human solidarity and comradeship, which is endowed with an almost mystical aura. The revolutionary movement, wrote Trotsky, "leads humanity from out the dark night of the circumscribed I," just as divine love guided the mystic out of the dark night of the soul toward union with God.

Indignation at injustice and compassion for the underdog replace the religious ethic in all those left-wing writers for whom, as for Keats, the miseries of the world are misery, and will not let them rest. In the name of this generous compassion and love of man, crimes are committed and justified, as they were formerly committed and justified in the name of the love of God. The most beautiful ideal may veil the most sinister deed: a brother's blood. Ultimately, the test should be not the intention but the act, not a man's ideal faith but his works. The romance of heroic ruthlessness cannot continue to coexist with the claims of human fellowship except by perpetuating a form of cant no less distasteful than that which it seeks to overturn.

IT SEEMS CLEAR that the present passion for revolution as a means of salvation for society and for the individual requires more precise scrutiny than it has received hitherto. "Revolution" in some instances appears to have replaced "fatherland," "war," and "glory" as the shibboleth of our day. Certainly, the indiscriminate use of the word should no longer pass unchallenged. That writers should employ it carelessly or casually, and should show disregard not only for human life but for human limitations and the needs of the inner being, ought to be seen as yet another form of intellectual betrayal.

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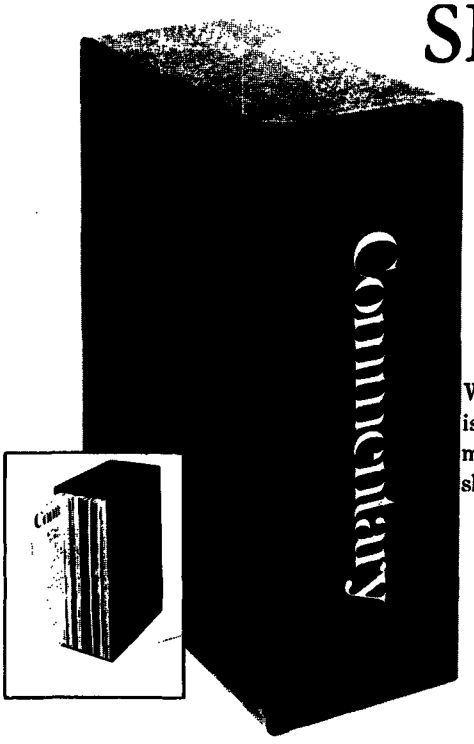

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Joyce Carol Oates: Violence in the Head

Elizabeth Dalton

In the last several years, Joyce Carol Oates has made a great impression. She has received many awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a number of short-story prizes, and now the National Book Award for fiction. And indeed, her achievements are impressive. At the age of thirty-two Miss Oates has published six books—four novels and two volumes of stories; her latest novel, *them*,* is being hailed as a masterpiece. All of her books treat insanity, sexual obsession, and violent death. We admire writers who deal with violence, perhaps because they attempt to confront the chaos that surrounds us and yet defies our comprehension—or perhaps because they have the courage to pursue their own imaginings to ultimate conclusions.

Miss Oates's work presents a mixture of two styles—one of them a large, earnest naturalism from which come detailed scenes of rural and urban desolation, the other a tendency to push beyond these life scenes toward transcendent meaning, an urge that expresses itself in the eruption of hallucinatory violence. In the first collection of stories, *By the North Gate* (1963), an old man delivers the baby of a wild, crazy slut and then is hit over the head and left for dead by the girl, who also drowns her child. In another story, another old man finds the dead body of his faithful dog with its belly slashed open by boys for a joke. In a third, three teenage boys on a killing spree rob and strike a girl with a heart condition, frightening her to death. And there are two stories of humiliation and horror inflicted upon Negroes.

The second collection, *Upon the Sweeping Flood* (1966), raises the ante even higher. In seven of the eleven stories there is at least one death, and in an eighth someone is hit by a car. A story called "What Death with Love Should Have to Do" is rather typical of the subjects the writer favors: there a girl tries to produce a miscarriage by riding on the back of her boyfriend's motorcycle in a race and bleeds to death. This plot also crystallizes the motif of sex and death, a sort of *lumpen liebestod*, that reappears in the novels.

There is an authentic feeling in these stories for the physical ambience of poverty, for the grease stains, the stale smells, the small pathetic decorative objects of plastic. One atmosphere that is particularly well evoked is the sleazy, dangerous world of small-town, lower-class teenagers that seems always hovering on the edge of violence. What seems less authentic, however, is the violence itself, and the rather programmatic way it is used to resolve every situation. In style, the stories are quite literary, with a kind of writers-workshop correctness of structure and development that makes the violence seem all the more deliberate and unreal, as though it derived from literary models rather than from experience. In the subject matter and the oppressive air that hangs over it there are intimations of Steinbeck and the early Faulkner; there is also an attempt to exploit a residual Catholicism to give violence a religious meaning, suggesting the influence of Flannery O'Connor. The allusions to the Church remain merely decorative, however; there is no genuine religious vision here as there is in O'Connor.

Miss Oates's first novel, *With Shuddering Fall* (1964), has the authentically bleak setting of the stories, and the same obsession with an idealized and literary violence. Karen, a beautiful seventeen-year-old girl, runs away from her respectable Catholic family with a racing driver, a brutal demon-lover type who hits her father on the head with a rifle butt, takes Karen's virginity in some unspecified but degrading way, later has intercourse with her so violently that she has a miscarriage, and finally, driven wild by their hopeless passion, smashes his car into a wall. Karen then runs bleeding into the street, where a race riot touched off by her lover's death is in progress. After a few months in a mental hospital, Karen is received back into her family; the book ends with Karen at Mass, praying for forgiveness. The rather correct structure of the stories gives way here, and through the transparent implausibility of the plot there looms a sado-masochistic fantasy which endows the heroine with tremendous power.

The figure of the girl whose beauty and sensuality bring about the eruption of madness and violence appears again in *A Garden of Earthly Delights* (1966). The heroine, Clara Walpole, the child of migrant farm workers, runs away from her family with a man who gets her pregnant and then abandons her. She becomes the mistress and finally the wife of a wealthy older man, and her son by her first lover grows up in this man's house, through Clara's manipulation gradually displacing his stepbrothers. At last, just as the son is on the point of realizing Clara's dreams by taking over his stepfather's business, in a frenzy of guilt and self-hatred he shoots the old man and himself. Clara, like Karen, winds up in a mental

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hospital. Of all Joyce Carol Oates's books, this is probably the best. The early part, dealing with the brutal and pitiful lives of the migrant workers, is convincing and often moving. The novel does suffer, however, from the banality of its conception; the story of Clara's rise and fall recalls too many popular novels and movies about the girl who schemes her way to the top and is then struck by retribution.

Expensive People (1968), which appeared two years after *A Garden of Earthly Delights*, extrapolates the mother-son theme from the earlier novel and transposes it to a new setting: the ambitious mother and the tormented son are now in sterile, affluent suburbia. Written in the first person by the son after he has murdered his mother, the novel tries unsuccessfully for an effect of black humor and biting satire. The mother is named Nada, the boy's elegant private school is Johns Behemoth, and the parents have friends called Maxwell Voyd, Harrison Vemeer, etc. The other attempts at satiric exaggeration are similarly heavy-handed and without humor. The writer of this sort of thing must have a certain degree of sophisticated complicity with the milieu he is satirizing; Joyce Carol Oates is simply too heavy and earnest a writer to carry it off. The book provides an experience rather like seeing the side of a barn hit over and over again with a baseball bat.

THE NEW NOVEL, *them*, is a larger, richer, and more carefully conceived work, covering the lives of two generations of a Detroit slum family and derived from the history of a student in an English class taught by the author at the University of Detroit, a girl called Maureen Wendall in the novel. The story begins in the depression with Loretta, Maureen's mother, but it is principally concerned with two of her children, Jules and Maureen, who grow up in the chaos of Loretta's life in Detroit. At sixteen Maureen begins prostituting herself and is found out by her stepfather, who beats her severely. After the beating Maureen withdraws into a catatonic state, from which she emerges after more than a year, to return to school, to take a course from Joyce Carol Oates, and, ultimately, through her strange helplessness and vacancy, to seduce a married professor into leaving his wife for her. Her brother, Jules, has many bizarre and violent adventures, the strangest of them his obsessive affair with a girl named Nadine, who shoots him in the chest, nearly killing him. At the end of the novel, Jules gets caught up in the Detroit riots and kills a policeman.

In the preface, the author says that she became fascinated with the Wendalls "because their world was so remote from me." Yet although the urban setting of *them* is new, its themes are familiar from Joyce Carol Oates's earlier work. In *them* the girl who uses her sexuality to destroy and is in turn destroyed is split into two characters: Maureen, the passive victim who invites violation, and Nadine, her cold, sadistic counterpart. Like Karen and Clara in the earlier novels, Maureen becomes mentally ill. Even the race riot at the end of the book recalls the first novel.

But *them* is much richer in disaster than anything else the author has written. The calamities suffered by Maureen and Jules are only slightly more horrible than the regular tenor of their family's existence—a daily round of illness and death, quarrels, beatings, drunkenness, arrests, madness, and murder. The author writes in the preface: "Nothing in the novel has been exaggerated in order to increase the possibility of drama—indeed, the various sordid and shocking events of slum life, detailed in other naturalistic works, have been understated here, mainly because of my fear that too much reality would become unbearable." The problem, however, is rather the reverse: nothing even threatens to become unbearable. The dosage of violence is so high and so regular that the reader becomes immune to it, and none of it seems to matter much.

One reason for the oddly bland effect of all the horror is the lack of structure and internal impetus in the narrative. Events do not build toward a climax, or accumulate tension and meaning, or illuminate each other, but seem simply to happen in the random and insignificant way of real life. There is no particular reason why Maureen and her sister Betty should kick their grandmother down the porch stairs before Maureen's stepfather beats her up, or after Jules gets cracked over the head by a policeman's gun butt. It could just as easily have been the other way around, and the reader comes to feel rather lost in a succession of lurid and dreary events that might have come from the pages of the *Daily News*.

Moreover, the style reflects a certain attitude toward the characters that deprives their misfortunes of context and significance. About her father, Maureen's and Jules's grandfather, Loretta thinks, "He had made thousands of dollars in a single month with his construction crew and then lost it all in a way Loretta could never figure out and didn't care much about—because to her and to the other women in the family it was lost and that was that—an incontestable and somehow respectable fact!" And later, "Loretta's father kept drinking and finally he was a kind of aged youngish man of the type Loretta often saw on Sunday mornings, sleeping in the doorways of churches or closed shops. That was that. A change, a different man. A new man." The assumption here is that people like "them," the Wendalls of the world, do not respond to misfortune as you or I or the author would, that it is as natural to them as the air they breathe. The style, with its rather thin, flat, "that was that" quality, is an attempt to avoid imposing on the character an alien sensibility, a capacity for grief or indignation she would not possess. Yet the result is only that things happen, and it is hard to care much about the people they happen to.

In the sections written from Jules's point of view, the style changes somewhat to reflect his richer and more poetic response to experience. The sentences become heavy and tautological, inching forward through thick clusters of elements in apposition:

> Jules had felt it, their sympathy—women at their best, their most healthy, giving sympathy to a

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man, their eyes growing moist with love for the death of a man. He felt that, he understood. This sympathy women drew up from the deepest, most private part of their beings, from a frightening sense of doom, of mortality, and now it was being directed toward his uncle—a man without worth, a failure!—and someday it would turn onto Jules himself, searching him out like a beacon, precise and knowing and forgiving. . . .

This manner too comes to seem empty and oppressive. The disproportion between the opulent syntax and the actual information conveyed is particularly striking in sentences like these: "Their argument was not exciting, did not excite them truly"; or, "This room had been redone also, remodeled."

THE READER is told that the author did a great deal of research for this novel, and that it is based mainly on the recollections of the real Maureen Wendall. The book even contains two letters beginning "Dear Miss Oates" and signed "Maureen Wendall." There is a lot of documentation of the day-to-day life of a lower-class family: jobs, houses, schools, conversations, clothes, hairdos. It all has some interest—we like knowing about other people's lives; but ultimately, like much naturalistic detail, it seems to pile up in excess of the power of the novel's conception to unify and animate it. The descriptions of Jules's day at the parochial school or of Maureen getting her hair set with rollers and spray just lie there inertly, slices of life, with the tedious and undifferentiated quality of our own least significant daily experience.

"What is form?" Maureen asks in a letter. "Why is it better than the way life happens, by itself?" The order of this novel is supposedly that of Maureen's story, of the way life happens by itself to people like "them." The author writes in the preface, "This is the only kind of fiction that is real." And indeed, at the end the characters do emerge into the reality of recent history, to take their places before the television cameras. But it is just at this point that the novel is at its most literary, that we become most aware of an author manipulating the material through style, trying to make of the facts of these people's lives a metaphor for her own vision of experience. Just before he kills the policeman, Jules is described riding through the burning streets of Detroit with a gun in his hands:

> Jules felt blood running down his face. Blood. He thought of blood. He thought of two girls in his childhood, twins, who had been stabbed to death along a city block, one of them struck down in front of her house and the other chased and stabbed so that blood ran in thin streams along the sidewalk, and the next morning everyone had come out to look at the blood . . . the Hecht twins . . . blood. Jules's own blood, pounding in his ears. In the frenzied pounding of his blood he felt something heavy emerging, a solid, violent certainty. . . .

The theme of blood is established by the obtrusive device of the flashback to childhood, and sustained by insistent repetition. The reader feels a point being made about the steady violence of American life, and the point plainly comes from the author, not from Jules. Beneath this didactic surface, there is no identification with Jules, no deeply felt experience, no real pity or terror.

It is hard to know what the author means when she says, "This is the only kind of fiction that is real." *them* is a novel; its materials come from life, but they have been reworked by the mind of the author until they resemble her other books as much as their real life source. Even the letters from Maureen have plainly been edited or rewritten (or else she did not deserve that F she claims the author gave her). The failures of the novel are failures of literary intelligence, of structure and style. And as in much of Joyce Carol Oates's other work, the violence is mainly violence in the head.

Jesus and the Jews

Chaim Raphael

THE JEWS have always been immensely suspicious of Christianity, both as a religion and for the effects on them of Christian societies; but their feelings about Jesus have been more ambivalent. If much that was tragic for them was done—to some extent—in his name, he himself was not always held responsible. Even to those kept away from the New Testament by a massive wall of fear and ignorance, there was a sense that Jesus was a Jewish teacher who had somehow taken the wrong path.

In more recent centuries, as Jews began to grow up "freely" in Christian societies, the Jesus story came into their consciousness in more positive forms. The absorption in a common culture brought endless echoes of the direct human appeal of his "sayings," the "superhuman" nobility of his character, the poignancy of his death. It was never easy to respond wholeheartedly; the Jews were, after all, labeled as the villains of the play: we fought to deny our own—irrational—sense of guilt. One needed a split mind to be able to accept on its own terms the overpoweringly Christian element in the European tradition of art and music—thus, Berenson on Renaissance paintings of the Virgin, Bernstein conducting the St. Matthew Passion (and even expounding the Christian meaning on TV)—while at the same time allowing the sense of our own history in relation to Jesus to develop its own feelings. To Chagall, Jesus

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could be painted as a crucified rabbi in Vitebsk, surrounded by the familiar floating figures of that legendary town. Alfred Kazin, in *A Walker in the City,* recorded an even stronger ecstasy of personal vision as a young boy when a copy of the Gospels was thrust into his hands:

> *For now we see through a glass, darkly.* I tasted the rightness of each word on my tongue. . . . *Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.* Offended in in him? I had known him instantly. Surely I had been waiting for him all my life—our own Yeshua, misunderstood by his own, like me, but the very embodiment of everything I had waited so long to hear from a Jew—a great contempt for the minute daily business of the world; a deep and joyful turning back into our own spirit. . . .

The ambivalence can never be fully resolved: and even for Christians the approach to Jesus is compounded (in a really "Jewish" way) by childhood memory, folk-history, poetry, and many other indefinable influences. No one can detach himself from his own involvement with history to deal "factually" with a subject which carries with it such clouds of "mystery." Scholars have long been able to show, for example, that the Gospel material which is supposed to furnish the traditional broad picture of Jesus is so "late" and full of gaps and contradictions that it cannot in itself provide any reliable "historical" picture of him at all. But most of these same scholars—attracted to the subject by their prior faith in Christianity—feel able to determine by instinct (and training) what comes authentically from Jesus himself as distinct from what was grafted on much later by writers drawing equally from the myths and mysteries of the Greek and Near Eastern world.

Jesus is, then, both the most misrepresented and the best known of men. The religion which grew out of his life and death centers on doctrines (death to expiate the sins of mankind, resurrection, the Second Coming) which depend (for Christian scholars) on faith and not "facts"; yet applying this faith, as it were, in retrospect, the Gospel sayings (fragmentary as they are) acquire a complete validity of their own, yielding a figure who can be known intimately, and whose vision and sense of destiny, as spelled out in the Gospels, have been felt by untold millions to be completely consonant with the Christological doctrines emerging later.

For Jews, the double-edged involvement with Jesus has concentrated on somewhat different problems. It has been common ground that much of what he is recorded as saying in the Gospels—especially the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke)—reflects traditional Jewish ethical teaching (as evidenced in later rabbinic writings) and even a respect for "the Law" (which he "came to fulfill") despite his familiar image as a trenchant critic of "scribes and Pharisees." Is he then to be "brought back" as a representative —even supreme—Jewish ethical teacher, with miracles, expiation, and resurrection played down as "unauthentic" to him; or was there something in his teachings and actions which took him out of the normative Jewish religious tradition, and thus foreshadowed the unbridgeable gap in outlook which developed later between Christianity and Judaism?

An early protagonist of the latter view was Joseph Klausner, who argued in his *Jesus of Nazareth* (written originally in Hebrew in 1922) that while every single word of the sayings of Jesus can be paralleled in Jewish writings (though often expressed more pointedly and powerfully by Jesus), there was ultimately something "un-Jewish"—and fallacious —in concentrating so heavily on ethics itself, in contrast, say, to Hillel who was preoccupied with interpreting the practicalities of the Law in ways calculated to help the good society to improve itself. The Jews had emerged as the ethical nation *par excellence* and could only continue to play this role if they guarded their separate national existence in terms that expressed their personal tradition. It made better ethical sense, as it were, to be kind to strangers (as ordered by the Law) than to proclaim an "unreal" abstract doctrine of loving your enemy.

What made Jesus unacceptable (in Klausner's view) was the conviction which came into his mind after his baptism that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, due to replace the existing system by a divinely-ruled brotherhood of all men and all nations in which all moral and social problems would *ipso facto* disappear. A faith which is "not of this world" runs counter to Judaism which "is definitely *of this world,*" calling for moral regeneration in the familiar circumstances of daily life. The Jewish leaders, "fighting for their national existence" against semi-foreign rulers susceptible to "a decadent idolatry," could not give way to "dangerous fallacies." This is all, of course, a very nationalist view, and not, perhaps, very perceptive of how history works. Christianity found its greatest strength in the early centuries through the most "unreal" of its beliefs—the imminent expectation of the Second Coming which attracted hordes of converts. The new sect turned its back on Jesus the Jew, dropped the Law, and became fully international. Jesus became a Christian.

WHETHER it was inevitable that things would develop this way is one of the many questions discussed in a new book on Jesus by David Flusser.* Flusser, a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has himself become a somewhat legendary figure (to those of us who don't know him) due to the rhapsodic account of his mind and scholarship given by Edmund Wilson in *The Dead Sea Scrolls.* In the first edition of that work, he is a man who is supposed to take three hours to answer a single question, yet is "neither a bore nor garrulous." His "best language" is medieval Latin. At the climax of an argument in a hotel lounge, with an orchestra in the background, he bursts into song with it, singing "a few bars of his exposition." In the latest edition of Mr. Wilson's book,† the rhapsody

* *Jesus,* Herder and Herder, 159 pp., $4.95.

† Oxford University Press, 328 pp. $6.50.

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continues. Flusser is the man who carries all the ancient texts—of all the disciplines—in his mind "as well as the philosophy and belles-lettres of classical and modern Europe." This grasp, and especially his study of the Scrolls, has led him "to make connections and draw conclusions that nobody else has or would have thought of."

After all this, it is disappointing—or is it inevitable?—that his book on Jesus turns out to be an extremely brief essay, and not even sustained and closely argued on a single theme, but a series of almost random aspects of the story—the Law, Love, the Son of Man, etc. But if it is hard for a conversationalist of genius to get on to paper in the same style, and if there are few signs of dramatic new "connections" that nobody else has thought of, the range of comment is certainly wide and stimulating. (The illustrations, which take up about a fifth of the 126 pages of text, are often interesting but only rarely relevant to the argument.)

On the question mentioned above—whether the departure from a deeply felt national tradition was implicit in Jesus—Flusser argues that the relevant factor was the accident (if that is what it was) that the new faith was spread in Europe: "Had Christianity spread first to the eastern Asiatic regions, it would have had to develop a ritual and ceremonial law based on the Jewish law in order to become a genuine religion." It was all due to Paul, then, who felt that it was the will of God to spread Christianity to the Greco-Roman world, where "liberalism" (i.e., absence of rituals on food, etc.) was the norm. Jesus himself (Flusser says) had no basic quarrel with the attitude of the Pharisees toward the Law, though he stressed, as they did, the importance of a moral interpretation of the ritual. His saying on purity ("not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what cometh out") "is almost a piece of popular moral wisdom." On the details of Sabbath observance, there were different interpretations at the time: Jesus and his disciples followed (e.g., on feeling free to pluck ears of corn) the Galilean tradition, a point not understood by the later Greek translator who built it up into a basic quarrel. On the Sabbath generally, the rabbinic tradition paralleled the famous remark of Jesus with a saying in the Mekhilta: "The Sabbath has been handed over to you, not you to the Sabbath."

MOST of this is familiar, though it is mixed with occasional hints of a "revolutionary" character in Jesus's teaching, so that at the end one isn't quite sure from the discussion where Jesus stood in relation to normative Pharisaism. The same is true of Flusser's comments on the relevance of the Dead Sea Scrolls. His approach is to link sentences from the writings of the Qumran sect (which he flatly calls Essene) to the Apocrypha, and even more to the apocalyptic *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* in order to show that, in the two centuries before Jesus, Jewish religious thought had already moved beyond the strict "right and wrong" of the Bible toward a subtler view which allowed for the "good and evil struggle within the heart of every man." The Golden Rule (of Hillel as well as Jesus) was in that period coming to mean that you had to love your neighbor as yourself "because he is like yourself." More deeply still, love of God – "the first great commandment of Jesus"—was "in harmony with the spirit of contemporary Pharisaism." The concentration of Jesus on love was therefore not new, though it was immensely significant as part of his "total preaching":

> From ancient Jewish writings we could easily construct a whole gospel without using a single word that originated with Jesus. This could only be done, however, because we do in fact possess the gospels.

This is a very pregnant remark. It leads Flusser on to what he considers the "really revolutionary" view of Jesus, the "unconditional love" which can embrace sinners and even one's enemies. In this (according to Flusser) he was rejecting some doctrines of the Essenes (notably their separation from the world and their mixed attitude of hate and love) but accepting ideas from *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* which, while not Essene, "belong to the fringe of the Essene cult." It was ultimately an "Essene discovery" that evil can be overcome with good:

> It is only human nature to love the one to whom one does good. . . . Those groups who lived on the fringe of Essenism outgrew the Essene theology of hate, and hence affirmed these very consequences of doing good to one's enemy.

It was from this same "fringe" that Jesus took over both the idea that one ought not to resist one who is evil, and the idea of "good news" addressed particularly to the poor and outcast. If one asks for some evidence on what was "within the fringe" and "beyond the fringe" at that time, Flusser's answer might be that he is entitled, through his instincts as a scholar or a speculator, to pick phrases here and there and fit them into a pattern to illustrate that the total impact of Jesus does not lie on the surface but is bound up with paradox. Indeed, he says something like this in discussing how Jesus could produce "the transvaluation of all values":

> We might say that Jesus's concept of the righteousness of God is incommensurable to reason: man cannot measure it, but can grasp and understand it. It leads also from the Sermon on the Mount to Golgotha where the just man is to die the death of a criminal. It is at once profoundly moral and yet beyond good and evil.

SIDE BY SIDE with these poetic flights (perhaps some of them were sung to the orchestra in Edmund Wilson's hotel) there are many interesting comments at a more prosaic level. On Jesus coming from a carpenter's background but also being learned, we are reminded of a talmudic remark: "Is there a carpenter among us, or the son of a carpenter, who can solve the problem for us?" Jesus's call to his disciples to leave their families and follow him reflected "an emotion-laden tension" which had arisen between him and his own

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family; and the call on them to "hate" their families (Luke 14:26) "does not sound so inhuman in Hebrew as in translation"! The "miracles" are explained in terms of other "miracle workers" mentioned in the Talmud. Alfred Kazin will be interested to learn that "blessed is he who takes no offense at me" should really be translated "who does not stumble" —i.e., who can treat Jesus as a rock. The "poor in spirit" who are—strangely—"blessed" in the Beatitudes are "the poor to whom the Holy Spirit is given" ("the phrase was a title of honor among the Essenes").

On the broader canvas, Flusser is extremely convincing in explaining the motivation of Jesus in facing what he regarded as his inevitable death, once he had accepted the full implications of being "the Son of Man" of Jewish prophecy. He never saw himself as dying "to expiate the sins of others"—still less as part of Dr. Hugh Shonfield's Passover Plot. He struggled with his premonition of death and saw no escape from it, though he may have wondered if the legendary immortality of some other Jewish prophets would also, miraculously, affect him. The trial is explained in terms of a decision taken by a small Sadducean "Temple committee" dealing with a troublemaker, certainly not by the formal Sanhedrin. Nor was he tried as a popular *political* rebel. (It was Barrabas, "the freedom-fighter," who was, after all, released to please the crowd.) The verdict was "the outcome of the grisly interplay of naked spheres of interest."

Behind all his comments, Flusser is relying on his claim that modern scholarship can "unlock" the original documents (or sources) from which the Synoptic Gospels were constructed. Armed with this, we can "interpret [Jesus's] sayings aright." But this simply fudges a crucial issue for "understanding" Jesus. "Aright" can mean that we can now reconstruct the sayings more efficiently in terms of the actual conditions and writings of the time. It can also mean that we can now understand much better than we did the ideas which Christianity has generated over nearly two thousand years, linked to the mysterious figure of Jesus. These are separate processes, though it is fatally easy to move (as Flusser does) from one to the other. The first—even if conducted with "reverence"—is part of the game of scholarship. Every week someone comes out with new "discoveries" which are thrown into the pool of argument —and fascinating it all is. The second is an existential response—emotional, artistic, poetic—linked in each generation to centuries of Christian expression in literature, art, and music, and based not on what Jesus may "actually" have said but on the traditional sayings —fragmentary, paradoxical, contradictory, but by now magical in their evocative power. Jews, no less than Christians, respond to this. Kazin, Bernstein, and countless others are examples at one level. At another level was the strange experience in 1944 of Chief Rabbi Zolli of Rome, who, having fought all through the war to save Italian Jews from extinction, had a vision of Christ in the synagogue on the Day of Atonement, and became a Catholic.

Almost every scholarly book on Jesus falls into purple prose at some point, giving way to the seductive joys of oblique suggestion or outright paradox. Flusser asks, for example, whether at the trial, "the man Jesus" may have thought that like other prophets he would be granted some kind of immortality. Clearly the phrase "the man Jesus" in the middle of a scholarly discussion, is a way of suggesting that the mystery of Jesus who was "also" *more* than a man hovers in the air. The same double approach lies in his assessment of why Jesus is particularly *important to this generation:*

> Today we are receptive to Jesus' reappraisal of all our usual values, and many of us have become aware of the questioning of the moral norm, which is his starting point too. Like Jesus, we feel drawn to the social pariahs, to the sinners. When he says that we must not resist evil because, even by our denial, we only encourage the intrinsically indifferent play of forces within society and the world at large, we men of today can at least understand.

Does Flusser mean—as he seems to—that the wheel has somehow come full circle with our discovery (through scholarship) of the historic Jesus coinciding—through the workings of Providence?—with the same kind of doom-laden age, to give validity at last to his sayings? It is a lively idea, but needs faith (*O Altitudo!*) to make it ring true. The time-worn (unscholarly) picture of Jesus has surely been just as powerful in other ages. Where did "unconditional love" receive purer expression than in some of the missionary activity of Christians in a very *un*-apocalyptic age, the 19th century?

If there *is* a new approach in our time, it may emerge rather from the extraordinary situation which has arisen with the people of Israel back in the land of their ancient fellow-Jew, and carrying with them, back to the source, the lessons of their wanderings in the Christian world. Flusser's work must reflect this to some extent, though it is not touched on in this particular book. But one would like to hear something on this from the conversationalist who can say so engagingly to Edmund Wilson: *"Les chrétiens sont dérangés; les juifs sont dérangés aussi; moi, je ne suis pas dérangé."*

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Mary à la Mode

THE WRITING ON THE WALL AND OTHER LITERARY ESSAYS. By MARY MCCARTHY. *Harcourt, Brace & World. 213 pp. $6.75.*

Reviewed by EDWARD GROSSMAN

IF TWO PIECES in Miss McCarthy's latest collection had been left out, her book would scarcely have needed to be noticed. It would have been enough to say that once again she had given proof of her skill at writing a certain kind of essay, often having to do with the deciphering and appreciation of a book she judges worthwhile, but, more memorably, with putting the needle into a reputation which fashion and misunderstanding have inflated past our ability to stand it any longer (in this collection see, for example, her "J. D. Salinger's Closed Circuit"). But everybody knows that she can do this—it has been her stock in trade for some time—and though they might feel genuinely grateful, there would seem not much to do but dispense thanks and go on with other things. What makes it inevitable that we think about this new book of hers longer than we would have if it were really, as advertised in the title, a collection of literary essays from beginning to end, is the striking way in which Miss McCarthy's approach to George Orwell and to Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* illustrates what can happen when a very bright, quite compact talent goes astray.

When Miss McCarthy fixes her attention on Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, or "The Inventions of I. Compton-Burnett," or on the imagined world of Nathalie Sarraute, seeking to explain what the author meant to do and how, exactly, he (she) succeeded, the result is lucid, vigorous—all those things Miss McCarthy is deservedly celebrated for—but it is unexceptionable: that is to say, it is hard to see how anyone, other than a professional critic committed to an opposite or variant interpretation of these works, could be moved to anything more disturbing or important than the pleasure that an ordinary reader gets at simply re-encountering Miss McCarthy's talent. This is the sense in which writing may be called strictly literary; it may almost serve as a definition of such writing that its author's argument, point, gist, may be well taken, or the "truth" (there is none) may be quite the other way around, but that it would make no difference at all either way, for all that really matters is the brilliance of presentation. It is simpleminded to accuse such writing of being meaningless, or useless, or in any way harmful: obviously the non-approbatory essays, like the one on Salinger, serve to release the unpleasant pressure we feel at the injustice of a wrong reputation; also, the writing of literary criticism, a specialized activity in a society that can afford leisure, may indirectly have a humanizing effect on what is known as the Quality of Life—though this has tended to be taken perhaps too much on faith. However, these considerations may be irrelevant. If Mary McCarthy on Emma Bovary can be downright charming and give pleasure, what more justification should be required?

SOMETIMES, not always, it is a sign of incipient morality when the pleasure that is to be gotten from reading literary writing is spoiled by a nagging suspicion that this writing is not, after all, serious. "Serious" can never be satisfactorily defined, but evidently it has something to do with words on paper whose meanings seem to have reverberations in the world, on actual things and persons and possibilities, as opposed (of course too schematically) to words that refer only to themselves, which inhabit a closed system. The composition and consumption of such writing is peculiarly interior, indoor. Travel, public events, war do not lend themselves to treatment—in purest form literary writing is commentary on other peoples' books. To repeat: Miss McCarthy is excellent at this. In addition, she seems to know it and, aside from her novels, she makes departures from straight literary criticism only when there is some unusual reason. For example, she tells us she was obliged to go to Vietnam, and write her two books, one about the South, one about the North, because her guilt at being an American was making it impossible to continue the comfortable and circumscribed life in which she could write of interior things. The Vietnam books were very popular, and as far as they were more sensitive and verbally proficient than most of the reportage from a war zone, they were welcome. But, finally, they were unsuccessful, monumentally so, for what they really did was only to document Miss McCarthy's avowed aim in coming to Vietnam of gathering all the evidence she could that would utterly damn and blast the U.S., ending with a depiction of the North Vietnamese as physically beautiful, happy, loyal, kind, and pro-American as compared with the ugly, depressed, corrupt, vindictive, and anti-American South Vietnamese. Miss McCarthy, writing of serious things, was not clearly credible, and perhaps this is why she confessed to feeling out of place.

"The Writing on the Wall," her essay on George Orwell, occasioned by the publication in four volumes of his letters, journalism, and essays, is not so drastically flawed, but it begins to show the difficulties Miss McCarthy runs up against when her subject is not perfectly suited to her temperament and imagination. Now the person and work of Orwell are important to Miss McCarthy, and we might have guessed this even if she had not chosen the title of her essay on him for the title of her book. During the Spanish Civil War, the So-

EDWARD GROSSMAN *reviewed* Smiling Through the Apocalypse: Esquire's History of the Sixties *in our May number.*

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viet purges, and the Second World War, she must have been in very considerable sympathy with Orwell. It is probably fair to say that in his dread of hypocrisy, his early opposition to Stalin, and his unillusioned solidarity with the poor, Orwell was the nearest thing to a political hero Miss McCarthy had thirty years ago. And she retains admiration for the man. But the point of her essay is that Orwell is no longer useful, in fact has become a pernicious influence, and that this was a necessary outcome of the nature of his life and work. Her tone is somewhat distressed, since her former model has failed her, but more significantly it becomes disparaging, aiming clever shafts at Orwell's way of dressing and living as if to puncture an overblown reputation. The reader feels that this is certainly not proper literary stuff—it makes a great deal of difference what is written about Orwell because his life and work (unlike Salinger's) are inextricable, having public dimension, so that to do a job of cutting him down to size involves more than tampering with a literary reputation.

WHAT IS unacceptable in Miss McCarthy's approach to Orwell is all the more disappointing because much of what she has to say is correct, and might have had a therapeutic effect if it had not been written in 1969 but in 1953, when it was relevant. Immediately following Orwell's death, in a development he probably would have found dismaying, a cheap popular adjective was coined, "Orwellian" (in the same cheap denomination as "Kafkaesque"), and had currency for the duration of the coldest years of the cold war. It was used to sell a received opinion about politics, without working through the hard and dangerous experiences that Orwell worked through before he decided that politics may be a trap. Today, this form of weak modishness has a mainly historical interest—at the time Miss McCarthy actually writes, the equivalent fashion, if any, is for ideology, action, engagement, without excessive thought given to what they may mean and what their consequences might be. In our time a writer's value is often judged by his immediate applicability: what is his program, what does he propose be done about racism, urban blight, drugs, above all about Vietnam? In fact, this is how Miss McCarthy concludes her reassessment of Orwell; she blames him for not demanding that America get out of Vietnam. "*It is impossible* [she says first], at least for me, to guess how he would have stood on many leading questions of our day. Surely he would have opposed the trial and execution of Eichmann, but where would he be on the war in Vietnam?" Curious: does Miss McCarthy mean that the Eichmann trial and Vietnam are not "leading questions"? Or is her admission that she can't guess "how he would have stood" only a rhetorical device that leaves her free to guess? In any event, one sentence later she says, "I can hear him angrily arguing that to oppose the Americans in Vietnam, whatever their shortcomings, is to be 'objectively' pro-totalitarian." Curious again: Orwell's antipathy to America is well-known. More important, it was he who wrote, in 1946, in his famous essay on euphemism (which is reprinted in the collection Miss McCarthy is supposed to be reviewing): "Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called *pacification*." Our too-natural reaction on coming across this is to marvel at what seems to be a clear case of prescience, one, moreover, that suggests very strongly "how Orwell would have stood" on the war in Vietnam. But we must refuse to play this game of Miss McCarthy's. We must declare (and stick to it) that we simply don't know—and add that this is substantially true of any dead man, however certain we may be at first that he would be staunchly on this or that side of some current burning issue.

Still, the charge rankles that Orwell's legacy is barren. We like to think, again all too naturally, that a figure we esteem continues to change the world for the better after his death. In line with our current thinking, we would prefer him to do this by offering specific programs which, implemented by us, would improve the world. Orwell, as Miss McCarthy shows, fails miserably. The only program he ever devised was concerned with bringing some honesty back to the English language—its implementation is something we feel we can well postpone, seeing there are more pressing matters at hand. Orwell left us only the example of his life, and his style of putting words together, and some books—*Homage to Catalonia, Animal Farm, 1984*—that are classics and therefore can mean no more to us than *Candide* or a sunset. While searching in vain for some indication from Orwell on how to proceed, we discover that he was not a deep thinker, that in many respects he was an uneducated man. We feel cheated, and angrily reject the notion that because his instincts were decent at a time (like ours) when most instincts were depraved, and because his work is of a piece with this instinct, he may have something to "say" to us. The possibility that the dead can neither help nor hinder us in any specific way is too depressing; as is the possibility that a dead man's complete program of action, with accompanying ideology, is only a delusion if we really believe it can help us solve our problems. There are certain things the living must do for themselves; even if we haven't the power to end it, only we can decide on what terms the war in Vietnam should end. Miss McCarthy, competent at distinctions and analogies when writing of things that refer only to themselves, has it in for Orwell because he cannot help us. Yet in a way all his work has the broadest applicability, because its decency has reverberations in the world of things, people, and possibilities, unlike straight literary stuff, and very little of it can be switched around without depriving it of what makes it special.

IF WE TURN now to Miss McCarthy's essay on the response to Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, we may see that while Miss McCarthy has a little trouble dealing convincingly with a man's life and work, there are certain other

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subjects that are totally out of her province, and mass murder is one of these. There is no need to rehearse the particulars and emotions that surrounded the controversy over the Arendt book. On both sides intemperate and manifestly untrue things were said. But there were a number of thoughtful and more or less damaging critiques of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* put forward; without denying that Miss Arendt has a large and infinitely skeptical intelligence, they questioned not only her management of the historical facts, but a certain animus that gave to her book its provocative quality. Among these serious critiques was Lionel Abel's "The Aesthetics of Evil." According to Abel, Miss Arendt rendered a mainly aesthetic rather than moral or political judgment, not only of Eichmann the prisoner in the dock (rather than the Nazi in uniform), but also of the dead Jewish leaders of the *Judenräte*. This is the reason Eichmann could come out of her version looking like a buffoon who deserved to be hanged, while the Jewish leaders emerged as villains. Abel also pointed out some inconsistencies in Miss Arendt's argument: if, as she charged, the Germans would not have been able to carry out the extermination without the "cooperation" of the Jewish leaders, how explain the mass killings the Germans perpetrated in Russia, where there was no Jewish organization? Abel tried to account for some of the animus he found, and some of the inconsistencies, by suggesting that an earlier study of Miss Arendt's, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* had been very much on her mind as she wrote *Eichmann in Jerusalem*: at times she seemed to be seeking tendentiously to bear out some of her earlier theories; at other times she seemed to be willfully ignoring her own conclusions, like the idea that totalitarianism is all-powerful and there is no use resisting it.

In her own contribution to the debate, entitled "The Hue and Cry," Mary McCarthy gives two motives for making such a break from her usual concerns as to write about the *Eichmann in Jerusalem* controversy. First, she feels she must defend her friend, Miss Arendt, from "slanders"; second, she purports to sense that Miss Arendt's critics "are running a private Inquisition or police state" and therefore it is an obligation to try and exercise free speech. As an example of the "slanders" Miss McCarthy chooses the essay by Abel. She promises to take it apart piece by piece. In fact she does not. Her tactic, if it can be called that, is evident when she tries to confront the important matter of the Final Solution in Russia. She "genuinely wondered" about this, she tells us, but "was able to find a genuine answer on pages 197-198. The answer is Eichmann; he had nothing to do with the shootings in the East. . . . The story of the Jews of the East was separate from the story of Eichmann, to which Miss Arendt restricted herself as much as possible." But this won't do. It leaves as urgent as when Miss McCarthy began to wonder about it the question of why, in Russia, the Jews were murdered in masses even though the murderers did not have the "cooperation" of Jewish leaders, without which, Miss Arendt wrote in a deliberate and well-known phrase, "there would have been chaos and plenty of misery but the total number of victims would hardly have been between four and a half and six million people."

If we begin to suspect from this that Miss McCarthy is not serious, we may be right. Later on she blithely informs us that she has not even read *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Her contribution does not deserve to be taken seriously, but exists instead as one of a great number of "opinions" that everyone, eventually, got to express in print. Nevertheless, Miss McCarthy's language here is revealing. When she identifies those non-Jews who have taken issue with Miss Arendt, she does it with a sneer: "Professor Trevor-Roper, who has a corner on Nazi history in its popular form, and Richard Crossman, M.P., who has been championing the State of Israel since 1946 and who winters in Tiberias." Mary McCarthy positively invites comparison with the girl one must make every effort not to cross when Yale is debating Vassar. Indeed, among people who may

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hardly have read more than a story or two of hers, she has the reputation of being able to "destroy" an opponent in polemic, particularly when she succeeds in catching him out on a matter of phoniness. This being so, it is surprising to find, after Miss McCarthy has left Abel relatively unmarked, the following passage, which deserves to be quoted in its entirety:

> And if Miss Arendt, a Jew, found it in her heart to pity Eichmann, is this a sin? Is this "aesthetics"? To a Christian, it is ethics; can this be the Gentile "blind spot"? A Christian is commanded not only to pity but to forgive his enemies. It is a hard commandment, and if the Gentile reader detected Miss Arendt showing a trace of pity for the clown that had murdered her own people, he was not shocked but moved to admiration. Abel no doubt would say that she did not extend pity (or charity) to the Jewish leaders, but they were not in need of it to the same degree, any more than they were in need of a great effort of understanding. We all, including Miss Arendt, pity them in a natural motion of feeling, but this is not the pity that counts, ethically speaking, which goes not to those nearest us (self-pity is scarcely a virtue) but to those farthest away and seemingly beyond the reach of human sympathy. Anybody can feel compassion for the Jewish leaders, even while criticizing their behavior. But "criticizing his behavior" is hardly what applies to Eichmann, and it would take a saint, as the saying goes, to feel pity for him.
>
> To me, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, despite all the horrors in it, was morally exhilarating. I freely confess that it gave me joy and I too heard a paean in it—not a hate-paean to totalitarianism but a paean of transcendence, heavenly music, like that of the final chorus of *Figaro* or the *Messiah*. As in these choruses, a pardon or redemption of some sort was taking place. The reader "rose above" the terrible material of the trial or was borne aloft to survey it with his intelligence. No person was pardoned but the whole experience was bought back, redeemed, as in the harrowing of hell.

Our prompt impression is that such high-flown sentiment is phoney. Suppressing this reaction, which may be a hasty one, we try to find the specific ideas within the purple prose that ring false. There are a few. Perhaps, for instance, it is not for Christians, accomplices by default in the Final Solution, to call on Jews, the victims, to show Christian understanding toward the criminals. And does Miss McCarthy really pity the Jewish leaders "in a natural motion of feeling"? We are entitled to have our doubts. We come back to our original impression: that Miss McCarthy is simply not to be believed. Her attitude toward Israel and the Israelis is more telling than her lyricism about choral works. For Miss McCarthy, Israel is almost—but not quite—beneath contempt. She writes: "The State of Israel promises that to Jews [that what happened shall never happen again], politically, by offering them a homeland, an army, and a foreign policy. 'You are safe now,' it tells them." On Miss McCarthy's part, this is just plain ignorant. No one "tells" Israelis they are safe now—if anyone did, he would be laughed at. Yet we must allow that there is something satisfactory, symmetrical, about this combination of prominently displayed feeling in favor of dead Jews who did not resist, and contempt, at best condescension, for the live Jews who make up the State of Israel and who do resist.

It is not so much that Miss McCarthy is vicious, or that she lacks the expertise of specialized knowledge, or even moral imagination, but that she lacks curiosity. To use her kind of rhetoric is like saying that you are not talking about millions of individual events, when a bestial force descended on innocent people. What you are really talking about is a juicy scandal conducted in the pages of literary magazines thousands of miles from the scene twenty years later. It seems never to have occurred to Miss McCarthy—this is where curiosity comes in—to stop for a moment, and ask, "What would I have done if I had been in the place of the Jewish leaders who look so bad in Hannah Arendt's account?" "What would I do and feel now if I were a survivor?"—to which the only honest answer would be, "I don't know," and the only decent "literary" thing to do would be to write "I don't know," or voluntarily to keep silent.

WE SHOULD NOT get angry at Miss McCarthy. To do so would be to imply that she really is vicious and has the power of doing real harm, and on both counts the implication is probably unwarranted. Though she is a well-known writer and read by many people, there is every chance that they (consciously or unconsciously) realize that when she departs from the criticism of novels and poetry she is exercising the privilege that every American has of airing political "views," and is not to be taken all that seriously. Moreover, it is not clear whether Miss McCarthy is in advance of changes in opinion, "molding" them, or whether she trails a step or two behind. In her writing over the last thirty-five years the fluctuation in her "views," as distinct from her literary opus, seems to divide itself roughly into three periods: from the middle 30's until sometime during the Hitler war she was a sort of near- or mild Trotskyite; during the Truman and Eisenhower Presidencies, on the other hand, she wrote glowing things about America; and in the last decade, and particularly since the Vietnam war has infected our lives, she has re-embraced a thoroughly anti-American ideology. For a sample of her manner in making use of her perfect right to change her mind, consider that in the midst of making fun of Simone de Beauvoir's Marxist preconceptions about America, Miss McCarthy wrote, in 1947: ". . . the irritating thing was that we did not feel negative. We admired and liked our country; we preferred it to that imaginary America, land of . . . violence . . . which had excited the sensibilities of our visitor." In 1968, writing from Paris after having visited Hanoi, Miss McCarthy says: "Nor franky do I think it admirable to try to stop Communism even by peaceful subversion. The alternatives to Communism offered by the Western countries are all ugly . . . town planning, city planning, conservation of natural and scenic resources are more in the spirit of socialism, even a despotic

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socialism, than in that of free enterprise. . . . And variety of manufactures, encouragement of regional craft, ought to be easier for Communist planners whose enterprises are not obliged by the law of the market to show a profit or perish. . . ."

Now it is quite possible that America in 1947 is not America in 1968, and that there is reason to have changed one's mind and become adamant. But this is not what we think about in looking at the development of Miss McCarthy's views. What strikes us is the terms she chooses: they are silly. They are also extremely contemporary. Miss McCarthy is no more in a minority, or a groundbreaking avant-garde, in today reproaching free enterprise for its bad ecology, than she was in 1947 in praising American democracy, or in the 30's in being a young Red. Her essay on Orwell arrives just a few years after one of those periodic, galloping "reassessments" of a man's reputation has gotten under way, and shortly after what passes for a literate spokesman of ideologically influential young people has written, "George Orwell is a fink." When Mary McCarthy goes out of bounds she is nothing if not *à la mode*, and this can never be vicious. When we laugh, or blush, we cannot be angry, or condemn. The best we can do is look elsewhere for serious writing on serious subjects, and be genuinely grateful to Miss McCarthy for the things she does do well.

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sial today. A dozen partisan accounts, dispensing either pro-Hiss or pro-Chambers versions, have appeared since 1950, but the mystery has still to be thoroughly unraveled. Did Hiss become an undercover Communist while serving as a New Deal official, and did he turn over classified State Department documents to Chambers, an admitted Communist agent? Or did Chambers, for obscure and malevolent reasons of his own, deliberately set out to frame a distinguished public servant?

Foremost among the reasons given by William Buckley for posthumous publication of his letters from Whittaker Chambers is a desire to counter the effect of works like Meyer A. Zeligs's "psychobiography," *Friendship and Fratricide* (1967),* which Buckley felt had tried to reduce Chambers to "a tangled, contemptible, neurotic mess." Buckley's friendship with Whittaker Chambers began in 1954, and over the next seven years they became intimate friends and faithful correspondents; Chambers was also an infrequent contributor to Buckley's *National Review*.

Those who anticipate fresh revelations concerning the Hiss-Chambers relationship or the case itself will be disappointed with these letters; they contain none. Curiously, however, Buckley tells us that he considers the correspondence "as having been as much influential as the god-damn Woodstock typewriter in convincing me of the credentials of Whittaker Chambers." The letters apparently affected some reviewers of the book in a similar manner. Thus, Hugh Kenner avowed simply: "These are not the letters of an untruthful man." I cannot agree with Kenner's or Buckley's obvious faith in Chambers's complete veracity. Having recently reviewed the entire body of available records on the Hiss case, I found that both Hiss and Chambers told a number of whoppers in their appearances before HUAC and the trial courts, and that Chambers emerged as far less credible than Hiss on most major points at issue. The two men do appear to have known each other during the mid-30's more intimately than Hiss ever acknowledged. Yet the many significant misstatements made by Chambers in his contradictory versions of the episode throw into question his two essential claims: namely, that Hiss had not only been a Communist co-worker but also the official who stole that curious mish-mash of government documents unearthed in 1948. But in any event, Chambers's letter proved no reasonable basis for judging his degree of honesty in the Hiss case.

They do, however, contain a number of extraordinary insights into their writer's restless and tormented final years. In particular, they show Chambers struggling to reconstruct some adequate sense of vocation in the aftermath of his wrecked journalistic career. Chambers had been a young bohemian man of letters during the 1920's, then a translator and Communist agent in the 30's. He surfaced in the 1940's, several years after he left the party, as a *Time* magazine editor and Henry Luce's personal pundit on the meaning of Bolshevism. Chambers resigned from *Time* during the Hiss case and, after Hiss's conviction, spent his remaining years on his Maryland farm as a free-lance writer. During the period covered by these letters to Buckley, he spent much time making a series of largely unsuccessful stabs at writing essays and articles while he labored on a philosophical work treating the decline of the West. Fragments of this uncompleted book appeared posthumously under the title of *Cold Friday*.

UNLIKE those typical ex-Communist informants who booked themselves solidly on the government witness circuit, Chambers had no desire to continue retailing his past experiences in exchange for headlines and per-diem expense accounts. He declined any involvement with Senator Joseph McCarthy's investigative road show and privately labeled the Senator a witless primitive whose antics endangered the entire anti-Communist movement. Chambers weighed his political activities after 1950 by a single yardstick—how they might affect public response to his earlier role in helping to convict Alger Hiss. "The Hiss Case," he wrote Buckley in 1954, "is a permanent war . . . I am not really a free agent and scarcely even an individual man. I am the witness on whom, to a great degree, it still all swings. . . . My reactions are a kind of public trust. They call for the most vigilant intelligence and careful judgment." Letters written just prior to his death seven years later confirm the persistence of Chambers's obsession with what he considered the meaning of the case, namely, that he had voluntarily sacrificed his own career to rally American resistance to Communism. In this light, he saw his final years not only as a living martyrdom on behalf of the democratic West, which he believed was losing a death-struggle with Communism, but as a *neglected* martyrdom to boot:

> I am not Don Quixote, have no talent at all in that way. If the West cannot use the Hiss case to its own advantages, the Hiss forces will use the case against the West. . . . On the other hand, I never believed that the West could make use of the Hiss case. My business was only to give it an eleventh-hour opportunity to do so on the outside chance that it might.

Throughout these years, Chambers debated with himself incessantly over whether to continue living or to commit suicide, and his dark reflections intrude often into the normal jocularity of his correspondence with Buckley. For although Chambers had concluded his personal commitment to the Communist party in the late 1930's, he retained to his death a deeply pessimistic conviction of world Communism's ultimate triumph. He tried often to divert thought and energy during these years from his overwhelming sense of impending doom. He took occasional flyers in the stock market, he enrolled in college to continue his formal education, he visited Europe with his wife and made other elaborate but unfulfilled travel plans. Yet Chambers returned always to his private war with the Marxist laws of history.

*See the review by Walter Goodman in COMMENTARY, April 1967.—ED.

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These he held accountable for most of the world's tragedies, not the least of which was Alger Hiss's emergence from prison, with Hiss himself still professing his innocence (and, worst of all, being believed by some). Indeed, in Chambers's imagination, or so the letters indicate, history and Alger Hiss seemed locked in satanic embrace, with Chambers despairing of ever defeating their combined forces.

In the course of their correspondence, the former espionage agent reminded Buckley several times of the distinction between his own views and those held by the *National Review*'s coven of anti-Communist ideologues. He calls Buckley "a true conservative," while as for himself: "I am at heart a counterrevolutionist. The two should not be antagonists, but the overlap of their position is, as I have pointed out, rather small . . . especially the moment when strategy or tactics arise. . . . [My] primary interest is to win a war rather than to defend a position." Chambers considered the *National Review*'s neo-Catholic and Burkean commentaries on the American scene decidedly inadequate when compared with his own purportedly Marxian analysis of history, an analysis that apparently conditioned his strange amalgam of policy proposals. Thus he opposed Senator McCarthy but supported the Polish and Hungarian uprisings, all the while urging a Republican version of Tory radicalism despite a waning faith in his nominee for the role of Disraeli—Richard Nixon.

But these and similar observations in the letters on the political scene of the 50's are all subordinate to Chambers's obsession with his supposed martyrdom in the Hiss case, an action that he believed held out to the West its best hope for rescuing itself from an otherwise inevitable demise:

> The thesis implicit in *Witness* is that, for the West, the struggle is its own solution. Out of the struggle itself, the thesis goes, the West may rediscover in itself, or otherwise develop, forces that can justify its survival. Lacking these, the West is specifically described as "a dying world," or "the losing side."

From the beginning of their friendship, Chambers tried to convey to Buckley the full meaning of his messianic outlook. To accomplish this, he ransacked the Western tradition for appropriate literary and religious analogues to his own "martyrdom," and a small company of such figures marches lockstep across the pages of his correspondence: Chambers as Jonah, as Camus's Sisyphus, as one of the doomed *narodniki*, as Kafka's Hunter Gracchus, and, in his last letter, as the Oedipus who reached Colonus—after the fall.

TRUE renegades from the Communist party, Richard Crossman wrote in *The God That Failed*, "will never escape from Communism. Their lives will always be lived inside its dialectic, and their battle against the Soviet Union will always be a reflection of a searing inner struggle. The true ex-Communist can never again be a whole personality." Crossman's observations hardly apply to most ordinary *apparatchiks* who left the party after some policy upheaval, nor perhaps even to those typical romantic radicals of the 1930's for whom the Communist party seemed the strongest available battering ram with which to break down the citadels of capitalism. They do, however, apply to the absolute convert, for whom Communism was a substitute church, providing both the logical tools of dialectical analysis and a faith in the iron laws of Marxist history. Only those who had experienced such a total immersion in Communism could appreciate the full meaning of Chambers's moral anguish following his break. The Hiss case provided him, belatedly, with an opportunity to dramatize the depth of his earlier imaginative involvement with Communism, whatever the actual mixture of fact and fancy in his testimony may have been. How unsurprising, then, that in the aftermath of Hiss's conviction, aware that "the West" had no further need of his particular testament, Chambers often lapsed into a state of suicidal despair: "Since November 6, 1952," he wrote Buckley in December 1956, "I have ceased to understand why I must go on liv-

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"M. didn't even bother showing until the third week of classes and then when he did, I wished he hadn't bothered. He's one of the New Profs, the ones who come on casual and try to play it cool, knock the System, and in other ways try to con us into thinking that they're one of us, the great unwashed disaffected student body.

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ing, just as I have no rational defense (to myself) why I permit this to happen."

With regard to his nemesis and the immediate cause of his anguish, Chambers seems to have veered between sentiments of compassion for the Hiss family ("To me and to my wife they remain essentially what they were—the friends for whom our feeling never changes, but whom history forced me to make suffer") and nagging bitterness toward others, like Rebecca West, who expressed such compassion: "I understood, as few others can, the rules of war that Alger fought under . . . but I found myself thinking: 'Nevertheless, if you take your eyes off those peculiar rules for an instant, there is nothing left to say but that Alger behaved like a complete swine. Not a very bright swine, either.'"

Chambers took refuge from his obsession with the Hiss case in a romanticized portrayal of his own experiences as a Communist. He compares himself at one point in the letters with the *narodniki* terrorists, claiming that his personal qualities "made me specially beloved . . . even among many of the crude, trifling American Communists." Most contemporary accounts of Chambers by Communists and other radicals who came into contact with him during the 1930's fail to confirm this estimate. At the time, his radical peers seemed genuinely puzzled by this curious, belligerent figure who confided regularly to people that he held an important post in the party's supposedly secret underground: how strange to find a spy who *announced* he was in the cold!

After the Hiss case, however, the one-time agent and informer began associating himself with a revolutionary tradition of greater stature, represented most explicitly by those Old Bolsheviks who had fought and suffered for 20th-century Communism in Russia, Germany, Spain, and elsewhere. In an effort to embellish his actual work as a routine courier and professed espionage agent, Chambers now claimed a place for himself among international Communism's former *haute noblesse*. This effort reached a climax of sorts with his 1959 visit to Arthur Koestler in Austria.

In the letters, Chambers regales Buckley with a long account of his conversations at Innsbruck with Koestler and Greta Buber-Neumann, Martin Buber's daughter-in-law and the survivor of seven years in Russian and Nazi concentration camps. Their recorded discussions, to be sure, are deeply moving, but Chambers's real reason for singling out this experience for Buckley's files becomes clear in the following passage: "Then, we realized that, of our particular breed, the old activists, we are almost the only survivors—the old activists *who were articulate, consequent revolutionists, and not merely agents.* Of the latter there are some around. Utter defeat." (Italics added.) In this scene Chambers attempts to transcend his remembered milieu, the world of the harassed Communist functionary and minor agent that he portrayed in *Witness,* for the more luminous experiences of an ex-Bolshevik mover-and-shaker. Visiting Koestler offered Chambers an abeyance from the acknowledged pressures of his actual American existence as an ex-informer. Both Koestler and Madame Buber-Neumann had emerged, like himself, from the depths of Communism but, unlike the ex-Communists of the *National Review,* they were people worthy of his intellectual respect: they had fought for Communism as Chambers himself might have wished to, and, in their apostasy, they now practiced the difficult trade of counterrevolutionary with far less anguish than he had experienced. For although Chambers viewed himself as something of a seer, he complained to Buckley more than once that his fellow Americans still regarded him as merely a controversial informer—a poor candidate for martyrdom.

Yet despite his continuing anguish, it remains possible that Chambers, like Oedipus a man of conflicting identities, managed in his last years to outwit the Furies that hounded his imagination. His earlier life as a Communist agent and, later, as an ex-Communist informer appears to have receded somewhat into the background of his mind, replaced by the more gallant odyssey of that Old Bolshevik for whom Innsbruck had briefly been Colonus. Considering his obvious suffering in this final decade of his life, one may certainly hope that this was the case. But havens like Colonus are always temporary, and Chambers probably recognized too that even the greatest of Old Bolsheviks had often ended their lives like Koestler's Rubashov, "letting themselves be sacrificed as scapegoats." Thus, at any rate, we find Whittaker Chambers in his last letter: howling still that History plays malicious jokes, complaining of his weariness, yearning for the peace that Colonus had deceptively promised to Oedipus. Chambers ultimately compares himself in this final letter with Malraux's fictional revolutionary, Katov, who walked willingly to martyrdom after having first divided his cyanide "with those comrades less able to bear man's fate." "In our time," he had written Buckley two years earlier, "I think, it has become true that there is no greater love than that a man share his poison with his friend." In this manner the letters conclude in 1961, much as they had begun seven years earlier, with Chambers professing a willingness to suffer spiritual banishment on behalf of Communism. He had come to despise its beliefs but he could still not dispute its logic. *Odyssey of a Friend* concludes his epic trilogy of self-justification, which began with *Witness* and continued in *Cold Friday.* "Think," Brecht's poem reminded "posterity," "When you speak of our weaknesses,/Also of the dark time/That brought them forth. . . ."

The Commissioner

HOW TO TALK BACK TO YOUR TELEVISION SET. By NICHOLAS JOHNSON. *Atlantic Monthly Press-Little-Brown. 228 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN

NICHOLAS JOHNSON, the outspoken member of the Federal Communications Commission who

Edward Jay Epstein is the author of Inquest *and* Counterplot.

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always seems to come down on the side of the angels in opposing such popular evils as Violence on Television, Concentration of Power, Media Monopoly, and Pollution of the Air Waves, has written a book which is eminently plausible. To be plausible, or literally "worthy of applause," an exposition need not be factually accurate. Indeed, as Hannah Arendt has pointed out in *Between Past and Future*, the liar can usually be more plausible than the truth-teller since he is "free to fashion his 'facts' to fit the profit or pleasure, or even mere expectations, of his audience," while also deleting those elements which would tend to confound his audience. An account of an event is most plausible when it is consistent, or made to be consistent, with an audience's preconceived notions.

The admitted purpose of Commissioner Johnson's book is to move individual citizens to political action. It is intended, Johnson says, "as a manual for practicing pragmatists" as well as an appeal to the "thoughful general reader." Thus, the concluding chapter advises the reader as to how he can involve himself personally in Commissioner Johnson's crusade to reform television. To rouse his audience to the requisite action, the Commissioner depicts a broadcasting system which is methodically withholding from the public information that is vital to its welfare (a fear which has been played on, as Edward Shils points out in his book *Torment of Secrecy*, more than once in American history). With considerable skill and economy, Johnson builds a plausible case against television, one that his audience can believe and get exercised over. But the way in which he achieves that plausibility is well worth examining in some detail.

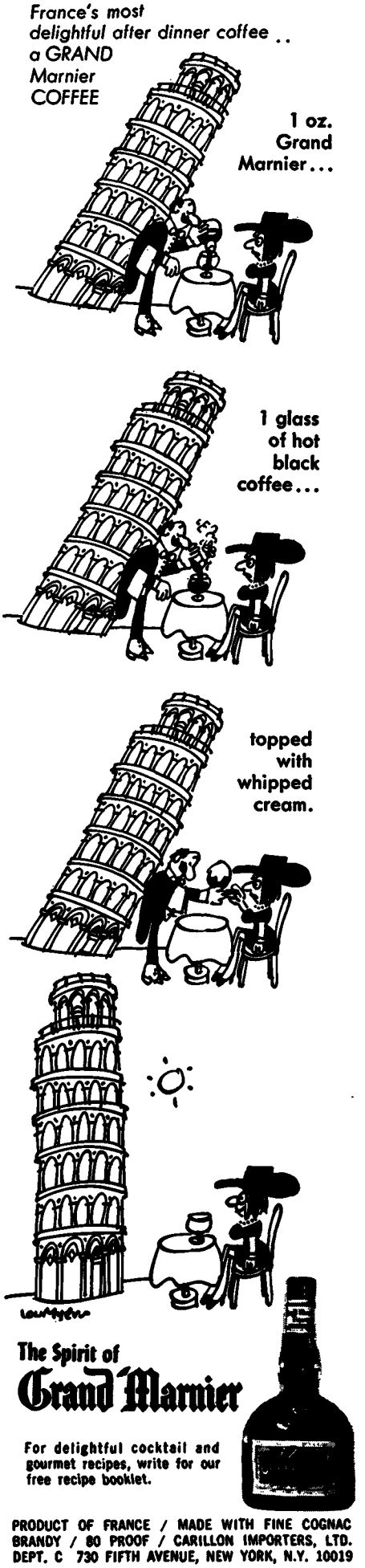
First, Johnson defines the battle in apocalyptic terms, relating all the evils of society to television, and demanding rhetorically:

> How many more crises must we undergo before we begin to understand the impact of television upon *all* the attitudes and events in our society? How many more crises can America withstand and survive as a nation united? Are we going to have to wait for dramatic upturns in the number and rates of high-school dropouts, broken families, disintegrating universities, illegitimate children, mental illness, crime, alienated blacks and young people, alcoholism, suicide rates, and drug consumption?

If his readers are concerned about these problems, they ought, he suggests, be even more concerned about the medium that is at the root, as he puts it, of *all* of them.

Next, Johnson presents a set of "facts" to show that information necessary to the public's safety is being suppressed by what he calls "corporate censorship." The thesis he advances is that, in deference to sponsors, broadcasters suppress news and information which might tend to deprecate consumer products. "The deliberate withholding of needed information from the public" is thus directly connected by Johnson to "the great profits for manufacturers, advertisers, and broadcasters" which are derived from advertising products on television. The evidence from which he draws these conclusions is the conspicuous *absence* of news and information concerning certain products. "Would it really surprise you to learn that the broadcasting industry has been less than eager to tell you about the health hazards of cigarette smoking?" Johnson asks rhetorically, then answers: "The relation of this forgetfulness to profits is clear: cigarette advertising provides the largest single source of television revenue, about 78 per cent." From the empirical "fact" that broadcasters have neglected to tell the public about the dangers of smoking—a "fact" one might assume that Commissioner Johnson has ascertained from a content analysis of television news—a clear "relation" of "forgetfulness" to "profits" is induced.

The problem with this plausible-sounding conclusion—a problem which the casual reader could not be expected to be aware of—is that the empirical "fact" on which it is based is, in reality, a non-fact. News concerning the dangers of smoking (as well as anti-cigarette commercials) has in fact been re-



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ported on network news programs carried by most of the stations in the country. Indeed, when Johnson first made this charge in *TV Guide*, Richard Salant, the president of CBS News, pointed in rebuttal to numerous CBS news reports on the link between cigarettes and cancer, including a number of documentary programs, which he listed, and 84 filmed stories on the subject shown on the CBS evening news since 1963.* In other words, Johnson's analysis was predicated on a false premise.

The Commissioner uses essentially the same rhetorical technique in presenting the rest of his "evidence" of "corporate censorship." For example, noting that 50,000 people die each year on the highways, he asks, "How many television stations told you—either before or after Ralph Nader came along—that most safety engineers agree virtually *all* those lives could be saved if our cars were properly designed?" Then, quoting Nader, he cites "the impact which the massive sums spent ($361,006,000 in 1964 on auto advertising alone) have on the communication media's attention to vehicle safety design." Again, the inference is clear: news concerning automobile safety has been blacked out on television in order to protect important sponsors. And again, the empirical proposition, though it is only intimated rhetorically, turns out not to be based on fact. Salant, for example, cited 44 different reports on the CBS network since 1965 that dealt with the charges against automobile manufacturers, and even a documentary which featured Ralph Nader.†

Johnson similarly discusses a number of other examples of unreported news—about cyclamates, drugs, harmful foods—but in each case it turns out that these subjects too were reported on with considerable frequency. (In his rebuttal, Salant itemized, in each case, a list of CBS programs that dealt with these hazards.) It might of course be argued that Johnson was honestly unaware of the television reports on the dangers of cigarette smoking, automobile design, etc., and therefore was not deliberately fashioning the facts to fit his argument. But Johnson makes it abundantly clear that by the time he wrote this book he had at least seen the list of news reports furnished by Salant which completely contradicts his specific assertions of suppression. Johnson closes his chapter on this subject by referring to that list, saying: "The thesis advanced in this chapter (first published in *TV Guide*, July 5, 1969) was violently contested by the president of CBS News, Richard Salant, in a subsequent article titled, 'He Has Exercised His Right—To be Wrong' (*TV Guide*, September 20, 1969)." Yet, despite the evidence presented in rebuttal, Johnson did not find it necessary to change his argument or even to take the counter-evidence into account. (Referring the reader to an article in *TV Guide* is a rather disingenuous tactic: where does one find back issues of *TV Guide*?) It thus appears that Johnson's pattern of suppression has been inferred entirely from a series of pseudo-facts of his own deliberate devising.

THE CUTTING edge of plausibility is simplification. In *How to Talk Back to Your Television Set*, Commissioner Johnson carefully avoids all the more complex, and interesting, questions surrounding the selection of news and programming on television. Broadcasting, for example, unlike other media, is a government-regulated industry: the FCC, on which Johnson serves, through its rules, decisions, and doctrines creates a political structure to which station-owners must conform if they want to keep their licenses. This no doubt is a factor in a station's decision *to* broadcast news which may be detrimental to advertisers. Rather than analyzing the elusive and subtle effects of government regulation on news operations, however, Johnson prefers to portray a simplified—and factually inaccurate—version in which the networks systematically censor news injurious to their sponsors.

The economic structure of broadcasting is another subject that is apparently too complicated for a book aimed at moving the general reader to political action. Instead of sponsoring whole programs, most advertisers now buy minutes of time scattered through a number of programs in an effort to reach the greatest number of homes per advertising dollar ("cost per thousand" is the usual index), and this effectively diminishes the control that a sponsor can (or even may wish to) exert on any one program. An analysis of the real structure of the economic relations between broadcasters and sponsors, like an analysis of the many factors affecting the selection of news, would reveal many things undreamt of in the Commissioner's philosophy. Of course, such an analysis, by taking into account hitherto unforeseen elements and by attempting to achieve an overall understanding of the way the medium works, would be unlikely to confirm the prejudices of those, like the Commissioner, who are already sure that the medium works the way they say it does, regardless of what the facts say. No doubt, the Commissioner's book, as it stands now, will be roundly applauded by the audience it is aimed at.

*My own content analyses of network news suggest that the other networks reported on the same subject with more or less the same frequency.

† Whether or not *"all"* the lives lost on the highway indeed could be saved by a "properly designed" car, as Johnson suggests, is another question. Recent research has indicated that a high proportion of highway deaths are either concealed suicides or homicides.

Dialogue

JUDAISM DESPITE CHRISTIANITY. THE "LETTERS ON CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM" BETWEEN EUGEN ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY AND FRANZ ROSENZWEIG. Edited by EUGEN ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY. Translated by Dorothy M. Emmet. Introductory Essays by Harold Stahmer, Alexander Altmann, and Dorothy M. Emmet. *University of Alabama Press. 198 pp. $7.00.*

Reviewed by ARTHUR A. COHEN

FRANZ ROSENZWEIG is undoubtedly the secret (and often not so secret) saint of religious Jewish

ARTHUR A. COHEN'S *"The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition" appeared in November 1969.*

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intellectuals. This is quite proper, for he represents both voracity for knowledge and the despair of ever achieving it; rebellious rejection of bourgeois and academic philosophizing along with an avidity for the post-Hegelian German Christian inheritance of autonomous fideism and existential philosophy. More important, however, Rosenzweig transcends these historical and philosophical dichotomies: he is a man who returned to ancestral Judaism, not as a simple penitent but as one who accepted the total heritage, reconciled it, and made of this reconciliation the grammar of a Jewish teaching for intellectuals. Then, sadly for the course of history but as befits a religious genius, he died prematurely, leaving behind a consummate statement of his philosophical thought, the magisterial *The Star of Redemption*. The present work, which contains the correspondence between Rosenzweig and Eugen Rosenstock on the subject of Christianity and Judaism, is a much earlier effort; indeed, it constitutes the earliest document of Rosenzweig's journey along the way to faith. Yet, not surprisingly, his youthful thinking is more acute and luminous, more suggestive, than that of most mature thinkers.

FRANZ ROSENZWEIG and Eugen Rosenstock met for the first time in 1913 at Leipzig University where Rosenzweig's uncle was on the Faculty of Law and Rosenstock, a convert to Christianity, two years younger than Rosenzweig, was a *privatdocent* lecturing in medieval constitutional law. Rosenzweig had studied medicine and then turned to history and philosophy; he had completed his dissertation on *Hegel und der Staat* for which publication was projected (it did not appear until 1920) and, well versed in the philosophical and theological foundations of medieval law, had sought out Rosenstock and became his pupil.

On July 13, 1913 Rosenzweig, his cousin, Rudolf Ehrenburg, and Rosenstock entered into a night-long conversation which had as its point of departure Selma Lagerlöf's novel, *The Miracle of the Antichrist*. Rosenstock, already committed to his notion of *Sprachdenken* ("speech thinking"), according to which truth is the creative revelation of divine and human speech, pushed the resistant Rosenzweig to the limits of his rationalism. It was shortly after this encounter (one to which their correspondence frequently alludes) that Rosenzweig himself determined to become a Christian—out of, not despite, Judaism. But in the course of services at a small Berlin synagogue, in what was to have been his last experience of a Day of Atonement, he passed through a reverse conversion experience which returned him to Judaism as a Jew of faith. In 1916, Rosenzweig, by then an officer in an anti-balloon battery stationed in Macedonia, received a letter from Rosenstock, an officer on the Western Front, which, as Rosenstock remarks in his gnomic prologue, "unwittingly" initiated his and "Franz's dialogue on Judaism and Christianity."

When Rosenstock's first letter arrived, Rosenzweig was still in the midst of feeling his way back into Judaism—not as a blind man, however, who inches around walls and over obstacles, but as a trained athlete who has shifted games: the pace, the energy, the endurance are intact, but inexperience and uncertainty alternate with tenacity and competitiveness. All this finds echoes in the correspondence which, as a human document, is splendid. As an intellectual document, the correspondence is no less remarkable, its close argumentation being justified less by the familiar interest in scoring points as by the fact that two human beings, profoundly respectful of each other, have joined in the highest play—those serious rites of the mind in which all learning is brought to bear to enhance gravity and delight. Nonetheless, at its depth the argument is for keeps, since these young correspondents understood that talk *was* life. None of the stunt-playing here of Luther's *Tischreden*, or the arch self-

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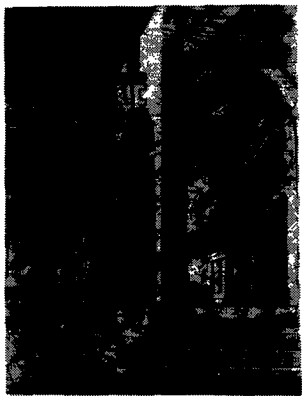

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consciousness of Goethe to Eckermann. This is not to suggest that either Rosenzweig or Rosenstock fancied himself greater than Luther or Goethe, only that it was truth and not showing-off (even to each other) that mattered.

ROSENZWEIG and Rosenstock were in full revolt against the academic post-Hegelian method of philosophizing. Philosophy then, as now, seemed at a dead end. Hegel had explained all things, and as the explicator *par excellence* his own mind had become the summation of reason, the incarnated *logos* which brought the wisdom of the Greeks and the faith of the Church to their consummation. Rosenstock no longer regarded himself as a philosopher, certainly no longer as the philosophical antithesis of Rosenzweig. Their precise divergency is therefore hard to locate, and the opening letters spar and ferret for the distinction. It is only when Rosenstock addresses Rosenzweig as "Dear Fellow Jew + post-Christum natum + post Hegel mortuum" [Letter 8] that the issue becomes joined, for however true it is that Rosenzweig was born into the era after the birth of Christ and the death of Hegel, he objects to joining in fellowship with a convert to Christianity. The two men are not Jews together before an overwhelming history, but Jews apart, for the one cannot understand the "stubbornness" of the other. The converted Jew can only know Judaism in "theoretical retrospect."

The militant separateness of the Jew is a Christian dogma, but, as Rosenzweig makes abundantly clear, it is also Jewish dogma, for while the Church was making of Judaism a dogmatic impediment to its eschatological vision, the Jew was conceiving the mimetic faiths of Christianity and Islam as preparations for the Kingdom of God. Unfortunately, Rosenzweig continues, the practical way "in which the theological idea of the stubbornness of the Jews works itself out, is *hatred of the Jews*." This enmity is theologically justified since for the Jew of faith the cause of the Church is a "fiction," and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ an indisputable fact which would have to be repeated—that act alone —if any man should ever again confuse himself with God. The Jewish correlative to Christian hatred of the Jews is not so much stubbornness as pride. Through these simple points of view, narrow and limited as Rosenzweig admits, "one can understand why the Jew can afford his unmediated closeness to God and why the Christian may not; and one can also understand how the Jew must pay for this blessing."

The correspondence is not limited to the personal standpoints of the writers. It expands from there, pressing historical controversy, Scriptural interpretation, the era of Johannine freedom in the aftermath of both Hegel and the French Revolution, to the ultimate theological issue, the nature of revelation. Revelation means, Rosenstock proposes, orientation. After revelation there is real distinction in the universe, "above" and "below" in space and "before" and "after" in time. In "natural" space and time, the center is always perspectival, marked by the position of him who numbers movements and events. But in the "space-time" of revelation, the center is fixed, the beginning is begun, the end can be previsaged, and the personal center is oriented by the truth revealed. Rosenzweig's own formulation of the problem of revelation, articulated in *The Star of Redemption*, was discovered a year after this correspondence ended, but it is a formulation which leans gratefully upon Rosenstock's suggestion.

THE TIMELESS relevance of this correspondence is to be found in its postural form as much as in its substance. It tells us something about that neglected category of human love, *philia*. The friendship of both thinkers did not, as it does for most of us, demand that areas of human thought and feeling be shrouded in darkness and obscurity. Rosenstock, for instance, knew perfectly well of Rosenzweig's love for Hermann Cohen, but that did not prevent him from being ironic at Cohen's expense, particularly since it drew forth from Rosenzweig impassioned clarifications; nor did Rosenzweig feel embarrassed at reminding Rosenstock that his conversion left him a defective, rather than a completed, Jew. The two men addressed each other as persons who, if not yet whole, could be made whole by the right speaking of the Word, the whole Word of God and the broken word of man.

The correspondence of Rosenzweig and Rosenstock-Huessy, then, constituted a dialogue in the true sense of the word. At the very least it should serve to remind us, in this time of organized ecumenical confrontations between Christians and Jews, that it is not Christianity and Judaism that can meet most successfully, but single Christians and single Jews, and that, in meeting, unless theirs be natural *philia*, the distortions of theological enmity will not be dissolved.

Rock Criticism

THE STORY OF ROCK. By CARL BELZ. *Oxford University Press. 256 pp. $5.95.*

ROCK AND ROLL WILL STAND. Edited by GREIL MARCUS. *Beacon Press. 182 pp. $7.50.*

THE AGE OF ROCK, SOUNDS OF THE AMERICAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION. Edited by JONATHAN EISEN. *Random House. 388 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by BARRY GEWEN

ONE OF THE most interesting phenomena of the rock movement in recent years has been the attempt to establish rock's position as a valid aesthetic form within the Western cultural tradition. The Beatles probably began this quest for legitimacy in the summer of 1965 when they used a string quartet to back up their recording of "Yesterday." Since then, the use of serious musicians has become more common, and we now have those one-time *enfants terribles* of rock, the Rolling Stones, using the

BARRY GEWEN *is with the International Association for Cultural Freedom in Paris. Mr. Gewen's review of* Ideology in America *by Everett Carll Ladd appeared in our January number.*

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London Bach Choir on their most recent album. (Why they need the London Bach Choir is a question nobody has yet bothered to ask.) We also have rock operas and rock masses as well as direct borrowings from the classical musical tradition —not only the use of Bach melodies by the Procol Harum but also full renditions such as an electrical Brandenburg Concerto by the New York Rock and Roll Ensemble. Significant, too, are the well-publicized tributes by Paul McCartney to the German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen and Frank Zappa's acknowledgments to men like Edgar Varèse.

All of this certainly does not jibe with rock's current Woodstock image as the music of rebelliousness and youth culture, and unquestionably the quest for legitimacy is weighted down with a deep ambivalence. For side by side with the yearning for recognition is the belief that rock's power is sustained by its opposition to society and the fear that criticism and intellectualization will cause it to lose its vitality and die. Because there is a strong current of hostility to all rock criticism, with many devotees arguing that the music should be heard and felt, not analyzed, the position of rock critics is tenuous indeed. One of the more recent manifestations of this ambivalence appeared in the pages of the New York *Times,* where Richard Goldstein, one of rock's earliest serious critics and the author of a book called *The Poetry of Rock,* felt compelled to argue a subjectivist, anti-rationalist position against Ned Rorem, thereby undercutting many of his previous articles and much of his career. Be that as it may, rock has been adopted by the intellectuals; the quest for legitimacy goes on, and, predictably, we are now confronted with a spate of books describing, dissecting, analyzing, and discoursing upon the entire rock phenomenon.

CARL BELZ's *The Story of Rock* has all of the accoutrements of legitimacy: publication by a university press, a collected discography, endorsements from notables like Henry Pleasants and the ubiquitous Ned Rorem, and an unnecessarily fancy price-tag; further-

It may not be *in* on campus
but this book says some things
that need to be said

PUSH COMES TO SHOVE

The Escalation of Student Protest
By Steven Kelman

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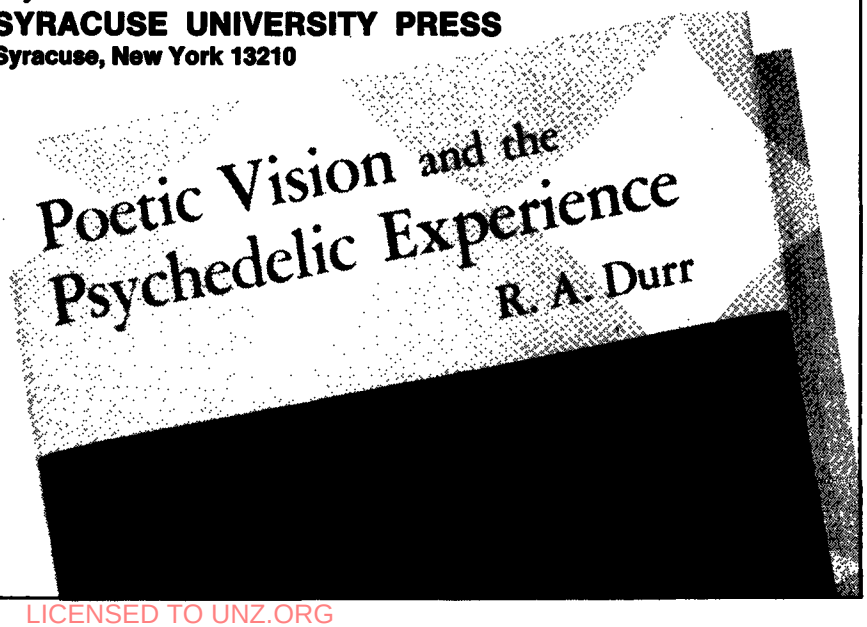

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more, Belz himself is an assistant professor of art history at Brandeis. But none of this helps—as rock history the book is no better than any number of quickie 75¢ paperbacks that take the reader on the standard tour, beginning with Bill Haley and the Comets, passing through Elvis, moving up to the Beatles and Dylan, and then onward and outward. But Belz's intentions are much more serious than mere history. He says in the preface that he will consider "the music as art and in terms of art," and announces: "My concern is with the ways in which the music emerged and has developed, with the stylistic directions it has taken, and with the evidence it provides for an understanding of folk art, fine art, and popular art in general"—certainly an ambitious undertaking.

IN THESE terms, the book stands and falls on its first chapter, "Rock as Folk Art," and in that chapter Belz has a lot of trouble keeping his feet. Anyone acquainted with the old battles in film criticism finds himself in familiar surroundings. All of those distinctions between the fine arts and the popular arts, between the supposed purity of folk culture and the banality and vacuousness of mass culture are resurrected and argued by Belz, who displays the certainty of a Jesuit. He *knows* how many angels there are on that pin! But whereas the *kitsch*-haters of the 50's felt free to indict all mass culture because they had a tradition which they were defending, Belz's case is complicated by the fact that his subject is one of the cornerstones of popular culture, and all of his attempts to distinguish rock as a folk art from the Tin Pan Alley tradition of popular music are dismal and confused. For the sake of his argument Cole Porter should never have existed—or Fabian. His value-judgments get confused with his categories and what began as a serious attempt at critical analysis concludes, finally, with the same kind of subjectivist approach that is the problem with most rock criticism; we get a description of the music that Belz happens to like, but no real understanding of "the music as art and in terms of art."

Belz at least makes an effort, and one is almost tempted to say it is not his fault that he fails, that is, after a reading of *Rock and Roll Will Stand*, edited by Greil Marcus, a graduate student at Berkeley. The title makes the book sound like a mindless polemic, and, sadly, the title is, for once, accurate. If Belz indicates rock's quest for legitimacy, Marcus demonstrates that side of the rock tradition that is in full flight from the mind. When the articles aren't being hopelessly subjective and irrationalist, they are irritatingly arrogant about the virtuousness of the young, as if an appreciation of rock were the only key to Heaven. Says Marcus: "The exclusiveness of rock 'n' roll is well-guarded. If the adults can take it, we'll probably reject it. In a way we want to share it, but in the end, it's better that we can't. If we're to be different, we'd best protect the sources of our differences whenever they are re-created." Elsewhere: "The intellectual leap, the habit of free association, the facility of making a single rock 'n' roll metaphor the defining idea for a situation or a time of one's life—that is the kind of thinking that makes sense. It is the factual made mystical, with a mythic consciousness given the force of fact, that is our translation of society's messages."

Of course, subjectivism can lead just about anywhere, but where most of the articles in the collection seem to go is toward a kind of breathless enthusiasm that is the contemporary equivalent of *Modern Screen*. All of this is really too bad, not because the book is without significance (future historians, after all, will find it useful as an artifact of the youth culture) but because amidst all the fan-club excitement is one serious article, "The Strange Death of Rock and Roll," that is deserving of better surroundings. Written by another Berkeley graduate student, Langdon Winner, the essay is both a fine analysis of the structure of rock music in the 50's and an interesting discussion of one of the few phenomena that rock critics are agreed upon—the total decline of rock music in the late 50's and early 60's. Perhaps someday it will be properly anthologized in a collection of real merit.

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FOR PEOPLE interested in finding out exactly where rock criticism is today, the best place to begin is *The Age of Rock*, an anthology edited by Jonathan Eisen. Practically all of the big names are here: Nat Hentoff, Ralph Gleason, Jon Landau, Gene Lees, Paul Williams, Tom Wolfe (notable absences are Richard Goldstein and Ellen Willis), and the articles represent much that is interesting and exciting in the current writing on rock: Wolfe on Phil Spector, Landau on Motown, Richard Fariña on Dylan, and the articles by Rorem and Richard Poirier which announced the beginning of the intellectuals' love affair with the Beatles. Though all of the writers are sympathetic to the music they are discussing, there is little of the puerile enthusiasm that marks the Marcus anthology. In one of the best pieces in the book, "Rock Lyrics Are Poetry (Maybe)," Robert Christgau succeeds both in putting Dylan down as a poet and applauding him as a rock lyricist, while at the same time reproaching all of those people who fell over themselves in their eagerness to proclaim rock the new literary wave, and Paul Simon's "Dangling Conversation" another *Waste Land*. As an extra bonus, the reader is treated to an interview with Frank Zappa, leader and inspiration of the Mothers of Invention, which, if it does not exactly prove him to be the genius some people claim, nevertheless does demonstrate that he is a shrewdly intelligent man with a greater understanding of our culture than many professional commentators. All in all, it is the best book presently available on the rock scene.

And yet, finally, it is dull. Somehow it never quite captures the excitement of rock, the joyousness of the Beatles, the demonic power of the Stones, the biting humor of the Mothers. If future generations had nothing but these essays to go on, they would surely wonder what it was all about. Can the intuitionalists be right—is rock destroyed by the written word?

Probably the answer lies in the present state of disarray in which rock criticism finds itself. Because rock is a new cultural phenomenon, there are no accepted criti-

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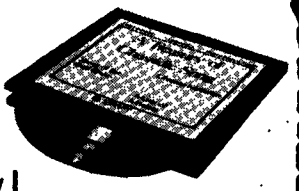

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cal standards, no canons of taste or established traditions to draw on. We are all equally in the dark, with little but our personal impressions to guide us, and the result for criticism is a large degree of subjectivism. What can a writer offer us except his own opinion, and then how do we know what that opinion is worth? There is so little that is generally agreed upon—the sad state of rock in the early 60's is one accepted notion, as is the value of the Beatles (though even this last judgment has been called into question recently—dare we look forward soon to a revaluation of Frankie Avalon?). But where should one begin? In the movie *Don't Look Back* Bob Dylan announces that he is as great as Caruso, and for those who think that he is in fact a brilliant singer, the problem here seems to be not so much whether he is right or wrong, but that the comparison is really between apples and oranges. Both are great singers, but different. Joan Baez couldn't sing "Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5," but then one wouldn't want Victoria de los Angeles doing "Silver Dagger" either.

The Age of Rock reflects his lack of accepted standards. It has no center—it tries to be inclusive, but succeeds only in being eclectic and uneven. Imagine a volume of literary criticism which included an analysis of Lawrence's imagery, a discussion of the economic impact of television on publishing, an interview with John Barth, an essay on Joyce's work habits, and a critical examination of the novels of Harold Robbins. The best that one can do with the Eisen anthology is to pick and choose; there is no reading it cover to cover.

Once again, film criticism may offer suggestive comparisons. Movies, after all, had to go through the same experiences of establishing their own validity; probably the chief issue for critics before the Second World War was whether film was a legitimate art form, and the question has been resolved only in the last ten to fifteen years. As with rock, there was a problem with standards, which could only be worked out over time, and although the reputations of Renoir and Eisenstein now seem solidly established, so important a director as Hitchcock still elicits lively debate. Even today, most film criticism is worth little more than one's personal estimate of the particular critic's opinions. Rock faces all of film's problems and more, for not only does it have to contend with those outsiders who dismiss all of its claims for legitimacy, but also with the large anti-rationalist element within its own camp. As the three books under review make clear, rock criticism is still very much trying to find itself, still trying to make some sense out of an uncharted wilderness. It took the French critics to give at least the beginnings of order and coherence to film criticism; rock still awaits its *politique des auteurs.*

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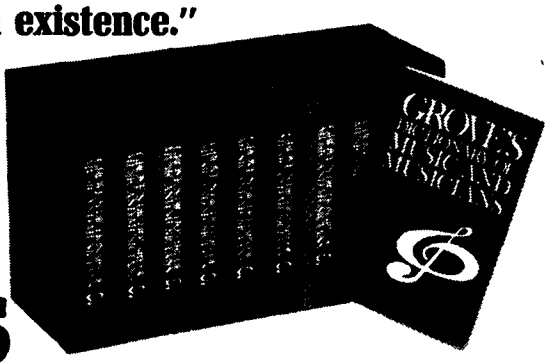

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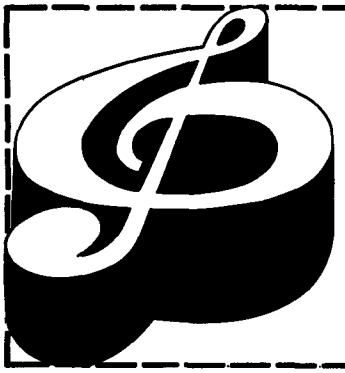

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